KOBUDO AND BUGEI

The Ancient Weapon Way of Okinawa and Japan

Sid Campbell

KOBUDO AND BUGEI

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The techniques and drills discussed in this book can be extremely dangerous. It is not the intent of the author or publisher to encourage readers to attempt any of these techniques and drills without proper professional supervision and training. Attempting to do so can result in severe injury or death. This book is not a substitute for professional training under the supervision of a certified instructor.

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PREFACE

Kobudo and Bugei is intended to acquaint the serious student of Far Eastern weapons with a deeper strategic knowledge of their use in order to become a true master of the Asian weapons arts.

The mind-set of a real warrior was such that in a life-or-death combative engagement, nothing could be left to chance. In feudal Japan, where warriors trained since early childhood to become samurai, physical skills were honed to a high level of perfection. If two samurai confronted one another in battle, all physical skills being equal, it was usually the one with the greater strategic and tactical skills who prevailed. It was the tricks, ruses, psychological ploys, military bearing, intestinal fortitude, commitment, loyalty, perseverance, and all of the tactics and strategies found in this book that made some warriors from that era great military strategists and renowned weapon experts.

Now you too will learn what these weapon masters have known. Whether you are a devotee of Okinawan *kobudo* (ancient weapon way) a student of classical or traditional Japanese *bushido* (way of the warrior), this book will provide you with the pure essence of what real weapon fighting arts are all about.

This work is presented in three sections. The first section deals exclusively with the *heiho*, or secret methods, that apply to all weapon arts regardless of style or origin. Without this, a weapon art would be nothing more than an assembly of techniques based more on theoretical application than realism.

The second section focuses on the entire spectrum of Okinawan kobudo weapons. It is my feeling that anyone who embarks on a journey into the world of feudal-age weaponry should have a broad perspective on all of the weapons of those times and know how, when, where, and why they were used and who used them. You should appreciate the fact that every weapon, weapon-tool, or martial instrument discussed in this book can be used in conjunction with the tactics and strategies found in the first section.

The third portion of this text covers the classical *bugei* (martial arts) weapons in the Japanese samurai warrior's arsenal. Although this book deals primarily with weapons actually used on the battlefield, the *do* weapons are included for general information as well.

Kobudo and Bugei does not feature hundreds of techniques illustrated in photographic sequences. This would miss the premise of what this book is all about—Okinawan and Japanese weaponry and the tactics, strategies, and styles associated with them.

If you are a serious practitioner of the Okinawan or Japanese weapon arts, I hope you will refer to this book often. Once you are capable of applying the knowledge that is contained in it, you will have a proper appreciation of just how skillful you must be to use martial weapons in combat.

INTRODUCTION

"From one thing know ten thousand things."
Miyamoto Musashi
Sixteenth century swordsman

To know oneself, to know the enemy, and to know that the way of the warrior is the resolute acceptance of death—this is the philosophy of martial combat as it applies to using weapons in life-or-death confrontations.

For the defeated in weapon combat, the result is both absolute and final. There is no second chance to reflect on a single mistake or ponder what one would have done different to change that outcome. Plain and simple, it is too little too late!

Perhaps the great samurai warrior Miyamoto Musashi expressed it best when he stated that one must have a secret method, or *heiho*, to build an indomitable spirit and iron will, to believe that you cannot fail at anything if you have chosen the path where that proper heiho is utilized.

This book is about heiho of combat, where weapons are used to protect or preserve one's life. It will familiarize you with virtually every *jutsu* (fighting art) that has ever been created and practiced on the island of Okinawa, the birthplace of kobudo, and Japan, where the samurai bugei arsenal was developed. On a fundamental level, it is also about providing you with tactical and strategic information that, if used efficiently, will let you become the master of your own destiny.

After carefully studying this book and mastering the techniques behind the techniques, I am confident you will understand Musashi's statement: "From one thing know ten thousand things."

That's what tactics and strategy is all about.

ABOUT REAL WEAPON TRAINING

"When one understands the use of weapons, he can use any weapon in accordance with the time and circumstances."

Miyamoto Musashi

Realism is defined as interest in or concern for the actual or real as distinguished from the abstract or speculative.

In the absolute art of weapon combat as it is taught in the serene setting of a dojo, realism can easily be lost due to the many theoretical practices that must be observed so a martial art can be taught in a safe manner. Only the pragmatically curious student ever ventures beyond the boundaries of theory when using weapons in a pseudorealistic fashion.

It is perhaps befitting that we make some distinctions at the outset of this chapter between freestyle weapon combat and freestyle empty-hand sparring. It is a common belief in the empty-hand schools of martial arts that a stronger, better conditioned, higher ranking, aggressive empty-hand pugilist will almost

always beat a weaker, less aggressive, lower ranking fighter. In armed combat, however, this will not always be the case. *Remember this always,* because much of the information offered in this book is based on this premise.

In the art of weapon fighting, a split-second delay in an offensive or defensive technique can mean the difference between victory or defeat. From that perspective it is not too difficult to understand how anyone could be defeated by a smaller or seemingly inferior opponent who is adequately skilled and wielding a real weapon. The point is: *the weapon can equalize the situation.* Great warriors and even mighty military forces throughout history have learned this lesson the hard way.

So it just makes good *bu* (military or martial) sense to realize that in the learning stages of any style of weapon art, even if you have previously earned a black belt in traditional kobudo by performing kata and two-man sets, you must keep your ego in check and accept the reality that in order to truly master a skill as complex as weapon fighting, mistakes are bound to happen. Early in this process you will also discover that fancy techniques—the ones that look dazzling and garner the applause of spectators—simply do not work well under actual combat conditions. Instead, a skillful student of the kobudo or bugei arts will take a simple technique he has spent considerable time mastering and learn to use it in many different ways. In the words of the swordsman Musashi, "Examine this well."

Musashi also stated, "One should learn to improvise." After all, his words, deeds, and actions were essentially the result of experimenting until he discovered what best suited his two-sword style of fighting. This should also be your philosophy when learning to use real weapons.

When we delve deeper into the topic of weapon fighting, tournament or otherwise, we will refer to the philosophies and wisdom of great warriors who lived during a time when their whole existence was based upon their ability to use their weapons in a precise and artful manner. What better way to truly appreciate the art of kobudo and bugei weapon fighting than heed their recollections of real-life experiences on the battlefield and adapt the lessons to your training. Once you have a deep appreciation for the wisdom of these warriors and can make it work for you in the dojo or during a tournament, you will truly know what real weapon fighting is all about.

THE PRINCIPLES OF KI-KEN-TAI

"If you master the principles of sword technique, and you reach the level where you can win with ease against one opponent, it is possible to win against any opponent in the world."

Miyamoto Musashi

The principles of *ki-ken-tai* are essential to winning when using real or training weapons. Although training weapons are designed for safe, competitive play, the key to becoming skilled in the art of kobudo or bugei combat is to use them in the most realistic way possible. In other words, if you expect to achieve genuine results from fighting practice and/or tournament combat, you should you integrate *ki-ken-tai* into your respected weapon fighting strategies. Even the judges and referees who officiate at all sanctioned tournaments will use the tenants found in this ancient martial arts philosophy to help them determine the winner of an engagement. It should also be remembered that ki-ken-tai have been responsible for victories on the battlefield in feudal times.

Ki has several interpretations in the martial arts. In the sense that we refer to it in this book, it literally means the spirit or willful intent of a fighter when he executes a blocking, parrying, or striking technique. A well-executed technique should never be misconstrued as accidental or lucky, though sometimes very skillful fighters will execute a technique so easily and swiftly that it appears to be a brilliant stroke of luck when it finds its target. Good officials will be able to distinguish between luck and intent. But to strike or block with ki is to make a conscious decision to execute the technique with full and clear

determination. Anything short of that is deemed unacceptable when it comes to realistically scoring a point at a tournament or during sparring at the dojo.

In ancient Japan, *ken* referred to the sword. However, in the context of this book it signifies the proper elements associated with wielding and using any weapon in the appropriate fashion.

Wielding a weapon properly is generally based on the ability to know its advantages as well as its limitations. A skilled warrior recognized these advantages and limitations and applied or overcame them in any situation at hand.

Having an innate familiarity for the ken of a weapon is one of the primary factors in becoming skillful in weapon combat. Without it, one would be a stranger to his own weapon. To grasp the essence of ken you must experiment with your weapon until you know its characteristics intimately well. Then you are ready to integrate the elements found in *tai*.

Tai literally translates to body. When it is used in conjunction with kobudo or bugei, it forms the central core of any given art. It alone, without ki and ken provides the martial artist with the building blocks that make up a style.

The component parts of tai encompass many small but significant subcategories that the fighter must know well. These include:

- knowing how much power to expend
- knowing the effective range against a stationary or moving target
- using the body's momentum when performing a technique or movement
- achieving maximum speed
- focusing a technique
- deflecting an oncoming attack
- maintaining momentum while counter-attacking

It should be remembered that all kobudo and bugei weapon arts have more in common than may first be apparent. The configuration, design, and structure of various weapons may appear to be different, but in essence they all utilize similar strategies during combat. Book I will reveal these similarities.

STRATEGY

"The man whose profession is arms should calm his mind and look into the depth of others. Doing so is likely the best of the martial arts."
The Chikubasho
Shiba Yoshimasa
Samurai warrior leader (1350-1410 A.D.)

A Japanese feudal warrior's ability to survive in battle was based on his knowledge of which techniques had been tested in actual combat and proven to be practical and effective. There was no room for theory or impractical methodology. Victory was also contingent on his superior training and a sound knowledge of his opponent's weaknesses. The warrior combined this knowledge into an overall strategy in order to prevail in these life-or-death engagements.

Strategy will play an important role in helping you gain the most realistic understanding of wielding your weapon. With the safety provided by proper training equipment, you will soon grasp the significance of strategy involved in real weapon fighting, even though techniques cannot be fully implemented during mock fighting sessions.

The point is that in those earlier times, where survival of a family, clan, tribe, village, army, or country relied on archaic hand-wielded weapons, life-or-death battles were not merely pastimes for competitive rivals. Sporting competitions emerged much later. Regardless of origin or style, most weapon instructional institutions have some fairly rigid civil, traditional, and ethical restrictions in place to insure that these ancient martial arts are practiced and preserved safely and sanely.

Combined with the fact that the weapon arts are taught in a controlled setting such as a dojo, where ritualized practice is usually limited to *kata* (forms or patterns) and two-man training drills, you have a more calm version of many of the old arts. Although these forms of self-defense are still just as effective today as they were then, their strategic significance does not have the same relevance as it once did when the techniques were used for real.

Let's not forget, however, that the techniques that are artfully rendered in almost all of the weapon-oriented kata of the various schools were, at one time, proven to be effective in actual combat. We must also not forget that the physical form of kata does not always clearly illustrate the strategy behind their intent. Some are subtly obvious to the skilled warrior; others are so obscure or hidden that only the creator of the form knew the secret interpretations.

Strategically speaking, this is where your sparring experiences will help determine which techniques, tactics, and strategies found in your traditional weapon kata are not applicable to certain types of defensive situations. You may discover that some of the subtle or hidden techniques do not work for you as well as they did for the masters of the past.

It will ultimately be up to you to determine, after you have spent every effort mastering a technique, if it works in realistic situations. You should consider your dojo or any place where you can spar with a partner as a mock battlefield where techniques can be tried and refined without getting hurt.

For those who have gone to great extremes to memorize a series of weapon kata to satisfy rank (*dan* or *kyu*) requirements or to win trophies in competition, know that it's not the quantity of techniques or the beauty of esoteric movement that ultimately determines one's ability to be victorious in real battle. One well-done, practical technique can be all that is needed to defeat an opponent regardless of the weapon used. Bear in mind that one simple weapon kata or even a combination of basic techniques can contain the knowledge, wisdom, tactics, and strategy that it took a great ancient warrior a lifetime to discover!

So never use a complex technique when a simple one will suffice. Movies, dramatic maneuvers seen at weapon kata competitions, and even prearranged weapon fighting with a cooperative training partner are a long way from how combat was perceived by the true warriors of ancient Okinawa and Japan. This advice will serve you well as you put into practice what you read in the following pages.

ABOUT STRATEGY VS. TACTICS

The Random House dictionary defines strategy as:

1. A plan, method or series of maneuvers or stratagems for obtaining a specific goal or result.
2. Also, *strategics*. The science or art of planning and directing large military movements and operations.
3. The use or an instance of using this science or art.
4. Skillful use of a stratagem.

Tactics is defined as:

1. The art or science of disposing military forces for battle and maneuvering them in battle.
2. The maneuvers themselves.
3. Any maneuvers for gaining advantage or success.

To erase any confusion when we distinguish between the use of the words strategy and tactics in this book, we will rely on the following definitions:

Strategy is a plan, method, or series of maneuvers for obtaining a specific goal or result. Tactics are the artful use of a given strategy in battle.

There will be times when both terms will be used in the same sentence, paragraph, or heading. In those instances, the term tactic is used to describe a strategy that is utilized on a smaller scale.

BOOK 1

WEAPON FIGHTING SECRETS

ABOUT HEIHO

Heiho is a Japanese word that Miyamoto Musashi used to express the path to enlightenment that can be followed by anyone who practices *bushido*, the way of the warrior. It does not mean enlightenment itself but more so the path one must take to be victorious in combat. His idea was unique in the fact that success or victory in combat was not the important factor but *how one got there*.

The term heiho also encapsulates *how* one would do something rather than *what* one would actually do. It is learning what it takes to develop the right outlook, the proper attitude, that frees you to be successful at whatever you attempt.

In the art of weapon fighting, heiho outlines a specific path that, when followed precisely, can produce incredible results. Once you have mastered the precepts found in heiho, you will know what it actually took to get you to the point where you understand yourself and your art completely. Profound to say the least.

There are other paths to becoming victorious, but the strategies presented here are in the context that heiho is to be used in no-holds-barred weapon combat. Any form of weapon-against-weapon combat, in a dojo or elsewhere, must be predicated on the belief that one cannot make a mistake and expect to win. There must be a certain realistic element if one is to truly master the art of weapon fighting, regardless of the rules or safety factors in place.

Let's say, for instance, that you are faced with a training partner or tournament opponent who is intent on unloading on you with his weapon. A person who is of the mind-set that the battle is real will experience certain psychological and physiological symptoms. Emotions such as fear, anxiety, confusion, and possibly panic will be accompanied by profuse perspiration, sudden weakness in the limbs, and in some cases temporary paralysis (where one "freezes" at the time where he should have reacted to an opponent's attack).

Any one or all of these symptoms have obvious ramifications, and a skilled warrior must know how to circumvent or, better yet, eliminate them altogether before he can be victorious in combat. Heiho prepares you for coping with these inappropriate behaviors by providing you with the tools to deal with them and make it possible to take the initiative and win!

There is an old adage that undoubtedly originated with the great samurai warriors of feudal Japan. It goes something like this: "The most difficult enemy to defeat is one who is not afraid to die." To grasp the essence of this saying, take note that the samurai warrior devoted his entire life to a single moment of perfect honor and loyalty.

One must have courage and resolution, but before this one must be willing to experiment

with strategy and tactics at every level of training. Do not be afraid of the repercussions of misjudged or misdirected strategies. Learn from them as you build an indomitable spirit and an iron will to succeed at winning every match. By constantly practicing with a variety of sparring partners and participating in tournaments, you will create a style of fighting that reflects your true combative abilities with weapons. Then you will have discovered the meaning of heiho as it applies directly to you and you alone.

Know both yourself and your weapon. Know both yours and your weapon's limitations. Eliminate the limitations and become one with your weapon art.

ENGAGING THE ADVERSARY

Engaging the opponent is as much a mental confrontation as it is physical. A truly skilled warrior will perceive the mental attitude as being the same as in any other ordinary activity. In peace or war, you must remain relaxed mentally so your perception of the situation does not become distorted. Whether the rhythm of the opponent's actions are fast or slow, you must remain calm and centered while staying focused on your opponent's every movement.

Your mental alertness is more important than what your body is doing. Ignore the body, because natural and reactive maneuvering will come from the experience achieved through diligent practice. Instead, focus your attention on the subtleties that will reveal the actions of your opponent. Keep an open mind to every offensive and defensive tactical maneuver that he may implement.

The range, or distance between you and your opponent, should always be controlled by you. A generally accepted military adage is the warrior who controls the range controls the battle. By controlling the range, regardless of whether you possess a smaller or shorter weapon, you can set up different techniques that best suit your strategy.

If your opponent tries to dictate the range, perhaps because he possesses a lengthier weapon or uses aggressive tactics, do not panic. Read the rhythm of his speed and maneuver, but be careful not to let him get any closer than you want until *you* deem otherwise.

A shrewd strategist will always anticipate an aggressive adversary at the outset of an engagement and not get caught off guard mentally or physically. He will always attack or counterattack when the opponent changes positions. You must appreciate the fact, however, that when you are changing positions during an engagement, you are exposed and not at your best defensively.

Spatial perimeters are defined as the amount of space that is available (or unavailable) when you engage the opponent. To one who does not have a broad perspective of heiho, this may appear to be of little consequence, but for one who is tactically oriented, space and the ability to maneuver within it is one of the primary considerations in the absolute arts of kobudo and bugei combat. Miyamoto Musashi had a phrase to describe this strategy: *ba no shidai to iu koto*, which in Japanese literally translates to "considering the site."

There is really more to it than most students may tend to believe. Although the site of an engagement played a vital role in determining the outcome of real battles in the feudal ages and today, here we will focus on the strategic aspects that apply primarily to one-on-one, weapon-against-weapon contests.

First, a skilled pugilist armed with a weapon should maneuver in a circular manner and always to the left. To some degree, this will depend on if you are right-handed or not. With

weaponry stances in which the lead leg (right leg) is positioned in front, this would insure that your weak side remains well protected.

Second, it is always desirable to have the space behind you not open to use, especially by the opponent. You also want to insure that you have plenty of room to your left so you can always move in that direction. You do not want an aggressive antagonist to be able to corner or trap you during an assault.

From a tournament perspective, always be conscious of the referee's position in the ring, but do not divert your attention from the opponent when doing so. Of course, a shrewd strategist will always position himself so the referee has a clear view of his techniques.

ABOUT RHYTHM

In the martial arts, rhythm is one of the most important forms of *heiho* that a skilled warrior can possess. Without it, victory cannot be achieved.

In martial arts combat, we must be cognizant of the relative speeds at which techniques can be executed. We must be familiar with the distinctions in rhythm when either you or your opponent changes from offense to defense; the rhythm of small, medium, and large adversaries as it applies to their ability to move swiftly or slowly; the characteristics of your weapon compared with the adversary's weapon; and the basic rhythm of the footwork. Even the force at which combat rhythm is applied is of great concern in tournaments or life-or-death battle.

Let's assume that your opponent is skilled at the martial arts and has exceptional speed. You must be able to assess his speed from several perspectives as it relates to the weapon he is wielding. If he has a lengthy polearm or the like, you know that techniques with these types of weapons generally take much longer to execute than those with shorter hand-held weapons. Now, let's also assume that the enemy has demonstrated a stunning display of hand speed. However, he lacks the foot speed to move great distances in short bursts. Taking it one step further, the adversary use powerful techniques, which you know are slower than light maneuvers.

As you can see, there are several types of rhythm in force of which you must be aware. A wise warrior will recognize these various rhythms and know when to interrupt any of them with an accurate attack when the opportunity presents itself. We sometimes refer to this tactic as break-rhythm because of the way it short-circuits an adversary's momentum, timing, and intentions before his attack ever reaches its mark.

Remember, in the art of real weapon fighting, a slash from a sword or a thrust from a spear will stop an assault's momentum immediately. Of course, your counterattacks must be fast and accurate. This should be investigated and practiced until you can appreciate the many ways your opponent's rhythm can be interrupted.

THE HEIHO OF THE OPPONENT'S WEAPON

From a tactical point of view, you must have a broad understanding of the many styles of weapon play, or the heiho of your enemy's weapon and its functional capabilities. Do not confuse this with the opponent's fighting abilities. It is just his weapon's characteristics and what can be done with it from a fighting perspective.

For example, the layperson or novice *yarijutsu-ka* (spear practitioner) may think that the spear is used like a javelin for throwing or simply for poking and thrusting. On the other

hand, the warrior with a broad vision of the yarijutsu heiho will see much deeper into the weapon and recognize that the simple spear can be used for ripping, slashing, pinning, restraining, bludgeoning, choking, blocking, lancing, piercing, and more. He will further appreciate the fact that it can be manipulated in circular, linear, spinning, and twirling motions as well as through a wide range of elevations and directional attitudes (vertical, diagonal, etc.). He will realize that the entire shaft and butt end of the spear can be used for fighting as well. To grasp all of these factors is to understand the heiho of that specific weapon.

One who has had extensive training in traditional weapon kata should have a greater comprehension of weapon heiho than someone without this experience. It is a subtle matter that many weapon and empty-hand practitioners never appreciate when they train in forms. By learning kata and continuing to train until a teacher has revealed all of the obscure or hidden techniques, the student starts to see just how versatile any weapon really is. To know all there is to know about any weapon is a definite strategic advantage. Know your opponent's weapon well!

It should be mentioned that many types of weapons have similar functions. For instance, long pole arms with a bladed or pronged tip can typically be maneuvered much like a simple staff. It's just that the more sophisticated versions are more lethal in their application. Most of the weapon's heiho remains the same, however.

You will appreciate this more when you have discovered the heiho of some of the basic categories of weapons. Short-handled polearms like escrima sticks, bludgeons, saps, bastinados, cudgels, knobsticks, canes, bats, billy clubs, and knobkerries can be maneuvered in a similar fashion and have a similar heiho. Even medium-length knifes can be classified to some degree as weapons with a similar heiho as short-handled arms. Appreciate this and try to learn all about at least one weapon in this category and you will have a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the others. The same is true for flexible (articulated) weapons and fighting instruments with twirling and spinning capabilities.

BEING PLACED ON THE DEFENSIVE

In order to defeat an enemy, you must have a clear vision of just how you are going to win. As in chess, one must always recognize one's position and situation on the battlefield. In other words, you must know if you are in a position of defense, offense, or neutral.

In weapon warfare, all other things being equal, the offensive combatant usually holds the advantage. To help you assimilate the logic behind this assertion, remember that just by the very nature of combat, the objective is to win. The combatant who initiates the attack can almost always utilize the element of surprise as a stratagem. In the tournament arena, the point/time factor enters into the equation as well. There is no reward (i.e., points) for waiting or biding time as the clock ticks away until the match is over. The victor is the one who accumulates the most points during a match.

Waiting wastes time. Waiting evokes anticipation. Waiting creates confusion. Waiting gives the opponent the opportunity to take advantage of the situation.

Being placed on the defensive requires a warrior to have an excellent grasp of traditional techniques found in the classical kata. You should remember, however, that many of the traditional forms were created to defend against antagonists (armed or otherwise) who were not always skilled adversaries. They were predicated on the theory that combative engagements would not be sport competitions

between equally skilled opponents who would know of each other's martial prowess.

The element of surprise combined with the opponent not knowing your skill level is what makes defensive tactics work so well. You must appreciate that and know the difference between fighting a skilled adversary and one who does not know of your martial skill.

The warrior who does not have a strong foundation in traditional weapon kata will be limited, to some degree, in his ability to defend himself against a skillful attacker. There are exceptions to this, but you must appreciate the fact that kata was created with defensive counterattacks in mind. If you do not achieve the ability to use a weapon in the defensive mode, you are destined to become a victim of your inexperience.

Since defensive tactics are difficult to execute under realistic circumstances, and many forms of competition place more importance on offensive techniques, instances will occur where both combatants will try to attack at the same time. Naturally each fighter will be vying to be the first one to defeat the other. Be aware of this tactic and plan your range strategies accordingly, especially if you are defensive oriented.

ONE ENCOUNTER, ONE CHANCE

There is much to know about this seemingly simple statement.

Regardless of whether you are in an offensive or defensive mode, you should never lose sight of the reality of weapon combat. Once the engagement has commenced, the objective is to soundly, swiftly, and strategically defeat your opponent without sustaining any injury yourself. In the case of tournament play, the "injury" would come from being struck with sufficient power and proper technique for the judges and referee to issue a point to the combatant who executed the technique. Consider such a match as a series of one-encounter/one-chance engagements which can be equated to several realistic confrontations. Your mind-set should be that each and every encounter within the time span of a match should be as if it were the only one. You either win or lose the match based upon your skills at that moment.

Never become complacent and assume that you have plenty of time or can simple catch up after the adversary has scored a point on you. That is not the philosophy of the warrior, and it is certainly not the way to live a long life on the battlefield if the engagement were for real. Always be aware that to survive a real confrontation is to know that you only get one chance. Use it wisely!

THE THREE INITIAL ATTACKS

To be victorious on the battlefield or in the tournament arena, you must be aware of any and all ways in which you and your opponent can attack. This is traditionally known as the heiho of *mitsu no sen*, or the three initial attacks.

Warriors who have trained in only one mode of attack do not have a solid grasp of the complete spectrum of attacks that can be used in combat, either by or against him. These warriors are destined to become victims of their own shortcomings.

The first of the three initial attacks is known as the *ken no sen*, or the initial attack. Most perceive this to be an offensive attack where the aggressive opponent presses his adversary with an assault intended to end the confrontation immediately. This is a correct assumption. The fighter will insure that the initial attack is executed with swiftness and no hesitation whatsoever. A wise fighter will always reserve some energy and never fully commit even though he has established his aggressive intentions. On the surface, the ken no sen will appear fast and explosive.

But do not be misled by the seeming simplicity of this plan. From the beginning to the end of the assault, one who employs the ken no sen must be unrelenting. The technique requires extremely quick footwork and substantial strength in will. The inner fighting spirit should be such that the opponent cannot avoid your overwhelming force and aggression. That is a tactic unto itself! Appreciate this and apply it wisely.

The second of the three initial attacks is *tai no sen*, or what the serious weapon fighter refers to as the awaiting attack. This tactical ploy has many unique characteristics.

A wise warrior using tai no sen will wait patiently and alertly until the opportunity arises to counterattack. He will assume a fighting position and act as if the attacker has no affect on him whatsoever. A more skilled tai no sen strategist will even become somewhat playful and apply a bit of acting. He might display boredom or unconcern for the attacker's seriousness, or perhaps feign a weakness or injury to make the attacker become overconfident.

The third of the three initial attacks, *taitai no sen*, literally translates to the body and body attack. It is a style of engagement in which you boldly intercept the attacker before he can strike his intended target.

Taitai no sen is often referred to as jamming the opponent, but it does not stop there. Once the attacker begins an assault, you must know precisely when to intervene with your neutralizing maneuvers. After you have broken the attacker's rhythm, it is essential to initiate swift and powerful follow-up attacks. Good footwork, sound maneuvering at close range, and precise positioning of your weapon is necessary. Whether the opponent comes in quietly or explosively, you must remain reserved, composed, and committed to carrying out your taitai no sen ploy.

The exceptional strategist will know how to vary the three initial attacks so that even the most skilled of fighters will not know his plans until it is too late.

THE HEIHO OF FOOTWORK

Bruce Lee once said, "When I first began studying the martial arts I realized that a kick was just a kick. Then, after mastering the abilities to express myself through kicking techniques, I realized kicking was a science. Once I absorbed the essence of what kicking was really all about, I then knew that a kick was still just a kick."

This analogy perhaps best sums up the way that a serious martial artist should perceive the heiho of footwork. Nothing more. Nothing less.

To begin with, it is important to realize that footwork deals exclusively with moving the entire body from one position to another. Stances are the static postures one assumes before and/or after the position change has occurred.

In combat, the speed at which you can execute a technique into or through an opponent's defenses is paramount to the success of the attack. Combined with an accurate attack, footwork is the prime factor in bridging the gap and striking the intended target.

First, let's look at the mechanics of sound footwork. When most people think of mobility speed (getting from point A to point B), they normally equate it with taking long, powerful steps or strides. For instance, runners pride

themselves on how fast they can cover a specified distance in the shortest period of time. World records are set by those who take the longest or most strides in the shortest period of time.

Thinking along these lines would be disastrous in the art of combat as it relates to footwork speed and covering distance. Remember that any combatant is most vulnerable when he is changing positions. Simply stated, the longer the stride, step, or slide, the more time one is open to attack. The shorter the stride, step, or slide, the faster the distance can be covered while minimizing the time that you would be vulnerable to an attack. Two or three short steps or slides are always more efficient than one longer one. It is exactly the inverse of the strategy used by runners.

Taking short, quick, explosive steps or slides remains the ideal footwork when engaging an opponent. Your safe distance (the range from your weapon-wielding adversary to yourself, including the length of his weapon) must be factored into this equation so that any and all footwork maneuvers can be performed with the minimum length of step.

THE HEIHO OF STANCES

Stances play an important role in the pugilistic arts. Anyone who is familiar with the empty-hand forms of self-defense will understand this since all of techniques are executed from a stance.

Traditionally, there are more than 75 different stances in the empty-hand and weapon arts. The martial artist who assumes a specific stance reveals a lot about his intentions. For instance, the forward stance (*zenkutsu dachi* in Japanese) is widely known among weapon and empty-hand combatants as one that emphasizes thrusting power. The cat stance (*neko ashi dachi*) epitomizes the use of speed.

This section will not describe all of the many stances; this can be done by a qualified instructor. But it is important information to know, because by truly knowing the intended purposes of all the traditional and modern stances used in pugilism, it will be possible to read your opponent's subliminal strategy before he even executes a technique.

A wise strategist will also know the maneuver possibilities (range, angles, reach, turning radius, speed, power, etc.) of each stance. By doing so you can apply the heiho of rhythm and the three initial attacks to neutralize the opponent's attack. You must have an innate sense for recognizing these battle stances and know exactly when to intervene tactically. Trying to second-guess the opponent in a time of conflict can be hazardous.

At this point you should understand that the heiho of stances and footwork are intrinsically linked. This connection relates to the way you face an opponent, moving rhythmically with and against him, flowing with your offensive and defensive tactics, and anticipating your adversary's moves.

Good strategic planning dictates that a wise fighter always realize that the heiho of artful positioning (stances combined with footwork) should never be a position at all, especially if you are within a range at which an opponent could penetrate your position. Movement should be continuous when you enter the range of engagement. Do not become complacent in a ready position, and always take advantage of the opponent who violates this rule.

The footwork heiho is sometimes referred to as *in-yo*. In real combat or tournament play, *mushin*, or the ability to move naturally without the absence of conscious thought, is essential to winning. So remember—when you move, move naturally. When changing positions, backward and forward or left to right, you must be smooth. Even when simply shifting your weight from one foot to another, both feet should move in harmony. Moving one foot only is not only unnatural but it puts you off balance. Naturalness also means maintaining that perfect balance between the body and the weapon at all times when you are within range of the adversary.

Never raise or lower the head or lean to the side. This will effect your balance and have a direct effect on your stance and footwork. Also, never let the eyes wander or the forehead become wrinkled. Steady your gaze and try not to blink or flinch while keeping your eyes a little more narrow than usual. Retain a calm facial expression while keeping the bridge of the nose erect and the chin jutting forward slightly. Keep the tendon at the back of the neck straight and tense at the nape. From the shoulders down, maintain an even distribution of tension throughout the body. Lower both shoulders, hold the back straight, and do not protrude the buttocks. Remember to keep tension between the knees and the toes and tighten the abdomen so the hips do not bend. In all martial arts, it is essential that your everyday stance become your combat stance and your combat stance your everyday stance.

THE HEIHO OF GRIPPING YOUR WEAPON

Most novice students have little concern for the art of gripping a weapon properly. Simply wielding the weapon in a manner that emulates the techniques in a traditional kata or copying the methodology demonstrated by a teacher is deemed sufficient to adequately grip and maneuver the weapon. Do not have this shallow outlook.

Learning how to hold a weapon properly is more than merely positioning the hands correctly. It must have a certain feeling, and you must learn to recognize this feeling. You cannot know the feel of gripping a weapon until you know how it's suppose to feel. And you cannot know how it is suppose to feel until you have acquired that certain feel. As confusing as this statement may seem, you must think deeply to grasp its significance.

A weapon can be manipulated in real combat or tournament play if it is gripped in the following manner. One should hold a weapon rather lightly with the thumb and the index finger, neither firmly nor lightly with the middle finger, and firmly with the ring and little finger. The hand should never be completely slack at any given time.

You must experiment with this method of gripping until the correct feel is achieved. Once you can feel the weapon as described, you will discover that there will be adequate dexterity to maneuver it smoothly in a circular, vertical, horizontal, or diagonal manner while still being able to cut, strike, slash, or hit without fear of losing it at the point of impact.

You must be clear on the true purpose of your weapon. In combat, any weapon is used for cutting, striking, or slashing the opponent, not for hitting his weapon in a mutually agreeable prearranged scenario. When you hit the opponent or make contact with his weapon, the hands should clinch to firmly secure its handle at impact. If this is not mastered, you could lose control of your weapon. Take some time to study how the muscles of the hand work as you maintain an intricate balance between tension (to retain control of the weapon) and dexterity (to maneuver smoothly and spontaneously).

THE HEIHO OF BECOMING ONE WITH THE OPPONENT

It is necessary to think as if you are actually the opponent you are fighting. In other words, you must learn to put yourself in the opponent's position and believe that your adversary is just as confident and experienced as you are. This is not intended to create a healthy respect for the opposition but rather to help you subdue any overconfident attitude that may surface after the match has begun. Warriors who are consistently victorious have a way of keeping their emotions in reserve while never losing track of the primary objective—defeating the enemy.

If you assume that the adversary is as skilled as you are, then you will remain focused and aware of what he is capable of doing under all circumstances. Unless you tend to move in the shadows (discussed below), this insight and awareness of your opponent's fighting skills can be enlightening and provide you with the necessary tactical information for quickly defeating him.

THE HEIHO OF MOVING IN THE SHADOWS

Moving in the shadows is a term that Miyamoto Musashi used to describe the times when a fighter cannot determine the tactical or strategic intentions of his opponent. The only realization one has when in this state is that the opponent would rather defeat you than be defeated himself. How that would happen, when that would happen, and by what means that would happen remains unknown. Of course, you want your adversary to always have the same thoughts about your abilities and intentions.

In instances like this, it is best to draw out the opponent by fakes, half-commitments, and so forth to discover his tactical agenda. An example of this is to execute a seemingly realistic strike into your opponent's protective perimeter. It must appear that it will actually cause severe damage should it have actually struck. By seeing how your opponent reacts to defend against this strike, you can initiate another attack with the proper rhythm and heiho to get around his defenses.

THE HEIHO OF CONCENTRATION

The heiho of concentration is one of the most vital self-control factors for the martial artist. It is literally the ability to center one's energy and not be distracted by outside interference while engaged in combat. It is also perhaps one of the least understood tools in the warrior's arsenal.

Distractions that can, and oftentimes do, affect the warrior include tension, fear, anxiety, lack of confidence, excitement, confusion, and pressure to survive. To master the combative arts, one must develop a method of eliminating such distractions.

The key to proper concentration is to first realize that the desire to win combined with undaunted enthusiasm must always be greater than one's thoughts other than the task at hand. Many martial artists have discovered that their performance greatly improves once they have overcome this hurdle. The desire to be victorious must be so intense that the mental determination to succeed will always block out any distractions that might affect your performance.

There are several ways to eliminate distractions. One of the most effective is known as the heiho of tunnel vision. This approach is used to center your vision, keep you aware of your objective, and focus you on the relationship between you and your opponent. Nothing else should matter when you are engaged in combat, either mock or realistic.

To develop this tunnel-vision, you should imagine the results of your efforts long before the encounter actually occurs. For martial artists who have spent years practicing the do of their art through kata, this approach should not seem too unfamiliar. Remember, traditional empty-hand and weapon kata are predicated on this method of mental practice while the body is physically performing the techniques.

To achieve the maximum results from this heiho, you must be thoroughly familiar with your weapon of choice. Consistency, accuracy, speed, and offensive and defensive skills are among the prerequisites that must be mastered when integrating the tunnel-vision heiho into your fighting style.

Keep practicing until you have mastered the heiho for developing strong concentration. Do not get discouraged if you are first met with mediocre results. It will come with serious practice under realistic training conditions.

THE HEIHO OF DISTRACTION

The heiho of distracting the opponent has a strong correlation with the heiho of concentration. It is a common tactic used in both empty-hand and weapon warfare. Hopefully you can learn to apply this effective military tactic to your fighting arsenal.

Distraction methods can be verbal or visual cues or a combination of both that can be misconstrued by the adversary. Simply put, these antics are clever ways to break your opponent's concentration just long enough to take advantage of his inattention. In many cases this time may be very short, so you must react spontaneously when the opening occurs.

The element of surprise should always be a prime element of warfare in general. You should think quickly, react smoothly, and be cunning. Individual conflicts and major military campaigns have been won by less powerful adversaries simply by knowing how and when to use the elements of distraction and surprise.

THE KIAI

The *kiai* is the sudden explosive yell often heard when a technique is executed. It is one of the paramount verbal distractions in the clever fighter's arsenal.

The purpose of the kiai is to startle the opponent, confusing or temporarily disorienting him long enough for you to take advantage of the situation. It can also assist in generating more body power if timed with proper breathing and muscle coordination, and it can prepare the body to take the shock of a blow by forcing air out and tensing the muscles, thus sustaining less physical trauma than would otherwise occur.

This fighting tactic is used primarily at close ranges and works extremely well in conjunction with other ruses. You should also keep in mind that once an opponent has been conditioned to react to an explosive kiai, you can force him to react to a false kiai without executing the weapon technique that he will have come to expect. Never get complacent and use the kiai too many times during a competition, however. The opponents who you may have to compete against later will realize your strategy, negating its effectiveness.

VERBAL INTIMIDATION

Verbal intimidation is another form of

distraction in the art of kobudo and bugei combat. It can be used either positively or negatively, and the tone in which it is communicated can serve a useful purpose for the superior strategist.

Intimidation, as with all distractions, must be convincing if it is to work. One of the primary features of this technique is to make your opponent react in an irrational manner by breaking his concentration and arousing either anger or self-doubt. Body gestures will enhance the technique.

Since there are so many verbal intimidation strategies that can be applied to a one-on-one combative situation, each individual can discover variations of this ruse that suits their particular style. The important thing to remember is that it must be convincing, and the result must be obtained in the quickest possible manner during the limited time frame of a tournament match.

GIVE AWAY THE SPIRIT

To "give away the spirit" is a little-known distraction tactic that forces the opponent to become lax and let his guard down. It works so well that it has made average fighters great and great warriors extraordinary.

Giving away the spirit can be called a mood transference tactic. That is, under the right circumstances and used properly, you can transfer (or give away) your feelings or attitudes to the opponent and literally force him to react in the way you want. It can be used to induce sympathy, stimulate enthusiasm, and even evoke pity in the most aggressive of opponents. Always remember, however, that in the absolute art of weapon warfare, you never want to give away *anything* unless you can use it for specific strategic advantage.

So how can you give away the spirit to your advantage in combat? One way is to express a relaxed mood in both body and spirit, which, if done properly, will force your opponent to drop his guard or become less enthusiastic. The inverse, likewise, can be evoked by showing too much aggressiveness on your part.

You can also give your spirit away be feigning boredom, showing signs of agitation, or even displaying elation during an engagement. Once you have read how your opponent has responded to your ruse, you take the initiative to press your attack unrelentingly until victory is achieved.

This is a sophisticated strategy that takes careful thought to integrate into your arsenal. Think this out well and you'll discover the subtleties that make it such a devastating weapon in itself.

HIT AND RUN

Regardless of whether one's strategy is offensive or defensive in nature, hit-and-run tactics offer the warrior two distinct martial advantages.

First, hit-and-run tactics reduce the chances of giving the opponent a sitting target. If you remain stationary too long, he will have ample time to establish and initiate his attack, thus increasing the chances of scoring a point or defeating you.

Second, moving before, during, or after an assault or defensive move will create confusion and apprehension in your opponent. It's like trying to hit an opponent who never gives a clear shot at an exposed target.

FAKES

The fake is a feinting technique that is executed so skillfully the opponent actually thinks he sees an action that was never executed at all. Performed well, the fake is an awesome tactic that can garner the skilled warrior many points in tournaments or devastating results in real weapon-against-weapon combat.

To the spectator or layperson, fakes may appear as nothing more than subtle body, weapon, and arm movements that have very little tactical relevance. But to someone facing an adversary wielding a potentially deadly weapon, a quick or covert movement is real in every sense of the word. Only when you have actually gone face-to-face with an armed opponent will you appreciate this.

If an armed fighter sees your body, arms, or

weapon begin a movement, especially a quick or powerful attack, he will generally assume that a particular technique is going to be directed at him. The situation is real, the crisis is eminent, the threat is too close for comfort, and above all, any inattention to any antagonistic actions could be lethal (in the real sense) or jeopardizing (in the tournament sense).

Be aware that this tactic can be used against you. By participating in lots of sparring practice with a skilled partner, you will eventually learn to recognize the subtle indicators that distinguish a fake from a real attack.

Keep in mind that fakes work well at close range and moderately well at short ranges. The farther away you are from the opponent, the less effective the fake will be. With practice at the different ranges, you'll discover the truth to this statement.

HALF COMMITMENTS

Half commitments are often confused with fakes. A half commitment involves actual execution of a technique rather than just the first few inches of it. The primary difference between the fake and the half commitment is that the latter is intended to come close to hitting the opponent, but it is retracted about halfway before reaching the target. This ploy can force a novice or even a skilled weapon fighter to flinch, overreact, falter, or attempt a countermeasure against an attack that never actually reaches its destination.

FULL COMMITMENTS

There is no difference between a full commitment and the actual execution of a technique truly meant to strike the opponent. It is emphasized here, however, because it is occasionally used as a ruse to mislead the opponent. In this case, the technique is executed and, after impact or near-impact is achieved, the weapon is returned to its original position.

As with the fake and half commitment, the primary effect here is to provoke a flinch or emotional response from your opponent. The quick retraction to avoid counterattacks is one of the distinct qualities of this tactic. Should you expect a counterattack, you can avoid or deflect it and then fully commit with another attack.

Full commitments work extremely well as alternatives to fakes and half commitments for keeping even the most skilled warrior guessing at

what you will do. Varying your deceptive techniques is very important in the short time span of a competitive match. You would be wise to employ many different types of deceptive attacks during the course of a match so that spectators—some of whom you may compete against later in the day—will not know how diverse a strategic arsenal you have at your disposal.

DRAWING THE OPPONENT

Drawing is a ploy in which you force or lure your opponent to come closer to you. Many fighters wielding shorter-range weapons use this tactic if they are not adequately skilled to contend with longer weapons.

Common drawing techniques to lure the opponent close enough for you to execute any one of the three initial attacks include appearing to leave your guard down, setting a slower pace for counterattacking, faking injury, displaying lack of skill, acting unaware of your opponent's plans to defeat you, feigning difficulty in wielding your weapon, moving in an awkward manner, showing signs of fear, and avoiding or running from your opponent's attacks.

As you use one or more of these drawing tactics, always remain alert for when the adversary makes his move in to your range. Make sure your recovery is well planned and your opponent cannot overrun your position. You want to have the adversary extend his range, be somewhat off-balance, and execute an attack that will never reach its target. You, on the other hand, are repositioned on stable ground, have solid balance, and are prepared with an explosive counterattack.

DECEPTIVE CLOSING

Deceptive closing is a strategy that is most effective when only several inches can make the difference between success and failure. Essentially, this clever tactic makes your adversary react to an optical illusion—one that makes him think that you have not closed the distance with his defensive position when in fact you *have* crept closer without him detecting it.

When the contest is at a critical range where either you or the opponent could launch an attack, both fighters will be at a heightened point of awareness. To get any closer by traditional means would definitely provoke a response of some type. You want to stay just out of that critical range before initiating the deceptive closing tactic. Here is how.

Discover your opponent's safe range by crowding him intentionally and seeing at what distance he reacts. Once you know that, you can lead him to believe that *he* is establishing the distance.

At the right moment, begin an overt movement with the leading part of your body. As he is distracted by this move, you slyly inch your footwork forward into and past his critical zone while retracting the obvious weapon maneuver at the same time. To the opponent there seems to be no change in position on your

part and therefore he has no need to worry that his defensive perimeter has been violated. It will appear like you have done nothing more than exhibit a bit of fancy or superfluous weapon work that poses no threat to his position. At the right moment you use one of the three initial attacks with the appropriate heiho.

BREAK RHYTHM STRATEGY

The break rhythm strategy is a refined science within the art of knowing the rhythm heiho. It is a military tactic in which you change the pace or tempo of your attack to upset the opponent's movement. It can be used to disengage from jamming situations where you or the opponent close distance so rapidly that your techniques are neutralized.

Simply put, break rhythm is used to confuse, disrupt, or upset the opponent's timing or intentions and gain access to his perimeter so you can strike an open target without getting hit in the process. Skilled martial artists can make this work so efficiently that they can attack and withdraw to safety without ever getting stung by the enemy's follow-up.

To appreciate this tactic, you must realize that everything has a rhythm or tempo. Clocks, a heart beat, tides, day and night, planets—all things have some sort of pattern or interval that regulates their existence. By studying any of these things long enough and pondering them deep enough, you will begin to recognize their tempo or rhythmic characteristics.

In the art of fighting, you have offense balanced by defense, static (stationary) balanced by movement, up by down, and so forth. The idea is to recognize when any fighter, regardless of how skillful, changes from one extreme to the other. You attack at the pause between these intervals.

It seems rather simple, but it takes a keen eye, fast reflexes, and a well-executed attack to use the break rhythm tactic effectively. Many fighters rely on luck to accomplish it, but the shrewd, well-trained pugilist always knows when and how to attack to be victorious on a consistent basis.

Learn to observe other fighters until you can detect when they change their rhythm or tempo. Also consider the amount of time needed to interrupt this rhythmic cycle. Compare this to the speed of your weapon techniques. If it is faster than the opponent's ability to change rhythms, you can use the break rhythm technique to defeat him. With practice you will become good at knowing when to strike.

ERRATIC MOVEMENT STRATEGY

If performed well and executed with precision, the erratic movement strategy can provide you with unique opportunities to attack your opponent's openings without him ever knowing he was set up. From his perspective, you will appear to be uncoordinated, uncertain of your abilities, confused, or perhaps unfamiliar with wielding weapons. This is exactly what you want him to believe.

The effectiveness of the erratic movement strategy is not guaranteed because there will always be several uncontrollable factors that determine its success. At best it's a good opening gambit and at worst it's a last resort to force your opponent to accidentally or greedily create openings in his defense. You must judge when (or if) to implement this strategy.

The essence of this tactic can perhaps best be summed up by saying it is difficult to hit a moving target. It involves moving in an erratic pattern, sometimes so unpredictably that you may be uncertain of the direction and momentum of your next step. It makes it virtually impossible for the antagonist to get a bead on you.

Good fighters use several styles of footwork to accomplish the erratic movement ploy. The stumble step; single, double, and triple switch step; cross step; and shuffle extended step are among the most typical. We will not explain the mechanics of these maneuvers in detail because they are simply terms used to convey the variety of unorthodox styles of footwork that can be employed by the creative martial artist.

Most traditional styles of empty-hand and weapon arts have an array of unconventional stances and stepping maneuvers. It's not a bad idea to acquaint yourself with them. The point of mentioning this is, with the erratic movement strategy, you do *not* want to use these movements because most martial artists are familiar with them and their purposes. Instead, you would want to develop the ability to work from stances that are not readily recognizable. You also need to learn to maneuver your weapon skillfully even when you are in awkward, unbalanced positions.

If you have had the opportunity to see or practice the drunken monkey style of Chinese kung-fu, you will instantly recognize the point that is being made here. It is unbalanced, awkward, and unpredictable to the uninitiated observer. Erratic behavior (by feigning drunkenness) is the ploy used to deceive the opponent. Then, out of nowhere, the drunken monkey defeats his antagonist with explosive techniques.

It's not necessary to go out and master drunken monkey kung-fu to grasp the essence of this wily ruse. You can create your own erratic movement strategies and footwork. It will be up to you to determine when to put this strategy to use when the opponent least expects it.

THE TIRED SYNDROME STRATEGY

This is another deception that works well if you are a convincing actor. It has been used for centuries in both armed and empty-handed contests and even in large-scale military campaigns.

The primary purpose of this tactic is to make a well-conditioned adversary think you are completely exhausted, out of breath, or weakened by sustained battering and cannot continue to engage him in a threatening manner. In many cases, this will cause your opponent to take advantage of your seemingly diminished physical state and move in for the kill. As he hastily and overconfidently attacks, you suddenly, explosively, and viciously spring into action with a well-timed attack of your own.

A shrewd warrior will apply this stratagem after the engagement has been going on for an extended period of time. It also must not be overused against the same opponent or during a tournament where future contenders may be observing.

INJURIOUS FAKUS STRATEGY

"Injurious fakus" is a term I coined to

describe the following fighting tactic. Essentially, it involves faking an injury in order to force your opponent to move in to finish off what he started. Most adversaries, out of a survival instinct or the desire to win in the tournament arena, will feel a natural urge to close in and finish the encounter when they see a weakened opponent. You will take advantage of this instinctual reaction.

In order for this strategy to work, the opponent must think that you have been struck by his weapon. Near misses or actual light contact (accidentally or otherwise) to a nonvital part of the anatomy might give you reason to implement this strategy. When he moves in, you strike.

Feigning injury can be done in several ways. After the hit you can manipulate your weapon in a more awkward or less controlled fashion. You can grimace and contort your face or utter explicit oaths. Then, after you sense that the opponent has been convinced you are injured, you attack explosively until you have attained victory.

Be careful not to overact (ham it up) or use this tactic too often. Otherwise your opponent or other competitors will realize you are acting and take advantage of your position.

VARIANCE STRATEGY

Many novice or intermediate weapons students have a tendency to think that a combatant has the time or capacity to utilize only one or two stratagems in a fight. This is not true.

The wise fighter will turn his entire fight into a consortium of strategies, overlapping tactics and deceptive ploys to achieve his goal. Never go into an engagement simply looking for the opportunity to strike the adversary with a "lucky" shot or relying only on natural speed or power. You could be in for a rude awakening if you are confronted with an opponent who is just as skilled as you in these areas. Great warriors never leave anything to chance or only rely on their natural abilities to achieve victory.

Remember, the most difficult adversary to defeat is one who thinks and fights the same way you do. If you rely only on your natural fighting ability and ignore strategy, sooner or later (probably sooner) your skills will be known and your game plan will no longer be valid. With a varied strategy, you can change your fight plan constantly so that no adversary can figure out your scheme.

Learn to vary your strategies and you will be successful against different types of fighters wielding a broad range of weapons. Never be complacent with your strategy or your confidence. This is the way of true warriors.

TACTICAL DO'S AND DON'TS

Become familiar with the following do's and don'ts of kobudo and bugei weapon fighting.

Do:

1. Watch your opponent at all times, even before a match.
2. Remain sure-footed and on solid ground as much as possible.
3. Use your peripheral vision to see the big picture.
4. Use the fighting strategies in this book as often as possible.
5. Use distraction methods.
6. Develop systematic but quick ways to apply tactics.
7. Use other martial arts training in addition to weapon strategies.
8. Use the ring and officials to your advantage.
9. Observe the winners of matches in your division.
10. Be aware of the range between you and the opponent.
11. Use fakes and half commitments to force your opponent to react.
12. Fight shrewdly.
13. Emphasize penetration techniques in combat situations.
14. Keep vital areas well protected.
15. Use only strategies that you have perfected.

Don't

1. Use fancy maneuvers or techniques.

2. Let your weapon stay in one position too long.
3. React hastily.
4. Take your eyes off your opponent.
5. Remain in one position or stance for a long period of time.
6. Use long strides or complicated footwork.
7. Use lax or uncontrolled hand manipulations with your weapon, unless it's part of a ruse.
8. Get forced or trapped in a position in which you cannot move about freely.
9. Waste effort on impractical techniques.
10. Let your guard down when changing positions.
11. Make full-commitment movements when your opponent is aware of your tactic.
12. Aim for nonvital or non-point-scoring targets.
13. Be under or overconfident.
14. Neglect your opponent's range and skills.
15. Forget to use the three initial attacks.

EPILOGUE TO WEAPON FIGHTING STRATEGY

The previous strategic and tactical artifices should give you some idea just how in-depth the art of weapon combat really is. It is a science that takes a great deal of study and conscientious practice if it is going to be mastered.

In addition to the strategies found herein, you should have a thorough understanding of your weapon art and the physical capabilities to execute its techniques without hesitating or faltering. Precision and total command of your physical capabilities are of the utmost importance in controlling your opponent and winning a contest, whether it's a friendly sparring match, tournament competition, or deadly serious combat.

Remember that in the game of chess, each piece on the board "moves" in a certain way, but the grandmasters have studied long and hard to develop their own unique strategies and styles. In the arts of kobudo and bugei warfare, you too must learn to employ strategy in your own way.

The unknowing individual oftentimes thinks it is the technique itself that serves his best interest when it is actually the artful use of that technique that's really most important. You should also understand that human nature plays more of a role in the absolute art of weapon combat than most fighters realize. Cause and effect, knowing when to take advantage of a situation, realizing that a human engaged in combat is more vulnerable emotionally than one would normally suspect, and knowing how to play on or against these frailties is what tactics are all about.

When engaged in weapon combat, tournament style or otherwise, you must be able to set your emotions aside and make strategic decisions based on sound tactical logic rather than spontaneous reaction. To see the big picture is much better than taking a tunnel-vision approach to defeating the adversary.

The true heiho of weapon combat is to fight the opponent and win the fight. Can it be anything other than this?

BOOK II

THE WEAPONS OF OKINAWA

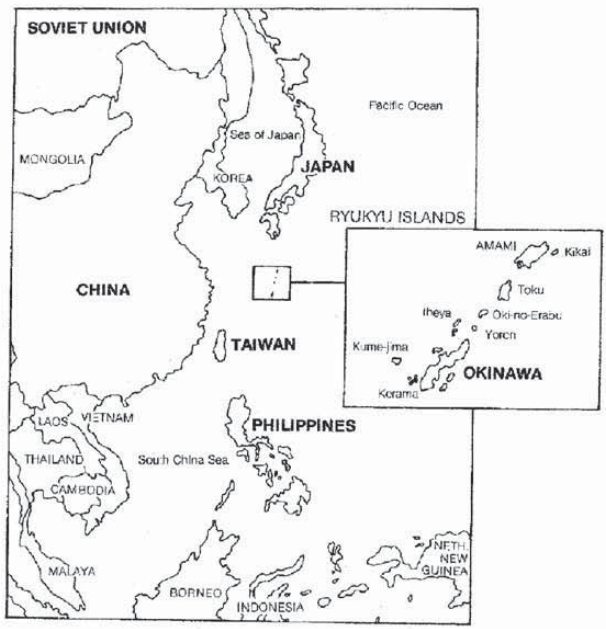
THE TALE OF RYUKYUAN KOBUDO

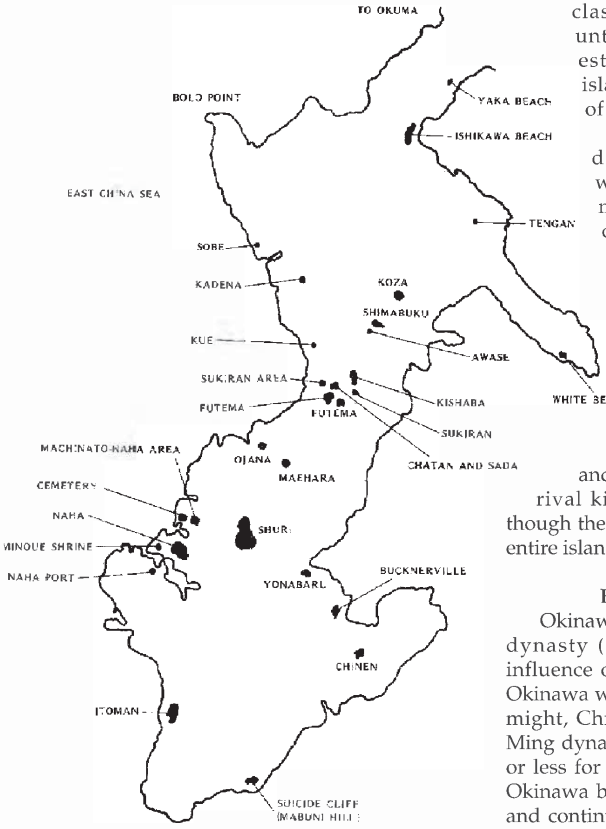
The Ryukyu archipelago, which numbers approximately 140 islands, only 48 of which are populated, extends in an arc along the coast of the Asian mainland between Japan to the north and Taiwan (formally Formosa) to the south. Okinawa is the largest and most important island of the archipelago. Okinawa literally means a rope in the offing.

The Ryukyu Islands are known by many names in many countries. The Chinese characters of the name are read by the Japanese as *Ryukyu* and by the Chinese as *Liu Ch'iu*.

The Ryukyu Islands fall into four main groups of islands: the Amami-Oshima group, closest to Japan in the north; Okinawa and the small islands surrounding it; the Miyako group; and the Yaeyama group, nearest to Taiwan in the south.

From ancient pieces of pottery, arrowhead chips, and bone fragments, archaeologists and historians have concluded that Okinawa was inhabited in prehistoric times. They speculate that early man settled there from different regions of Asia.





Since the Ryukyuans are a mixture of several races, including the Malay, Mongol, and Ainu of Japan. It is further believed that the first settlers in the Ryukyu Islands probably came from the Pacific islands to the south and in succeeding waves from China and Japan. These early travelers may have settled in the archipelago because of problems in their mother countries, or perhaps because they found the climate favorable. The causes of settlement remain a matter of conjecture to this day.

There is no evidence of a ruling class or governing body in Okinawa until the emergence of Shunten, who established himself as a king of the island in 1187 A.D. King Shunten was of Japanese ancestry.

According to legend, Tametomo, a distinguished Japanese feudal-age warrior of the twelfth century and a member of the Minamoto clan, met defeat at the hands of a rival and fled to Okinawa. He married an Okinawan girl, who bore him a gifted son, Shunten, the first of a new and able line of future Okinawan rulers.

By 1314, Okinawa was divided into three rival kingdoms. To the south was Nanzan, in the center was Chuzan, and in the north was Hokusan. The three rival kingdoms were in constant conflict, though the central kingdom of Chuzan ruled the entire island.

Early Influence from China

Okinawa traded with China during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), and Chinese cultural influence on Okinawa was considerable. Since Okinawa was nearby and had very little military might, China's policy of expansion under the Ming dynasty led to demands and tribute, more or less for protection from other Asian powers. Okinawa began paying tribute to China in 1372 and continued to do so for about five centuries. These centuries are known as Okinawa's tributary period.

The Okinawan people did not particularly mind having to pay tribute and allegiance to China because of the trade and stability that was made possible by the protection of this strong ally. The tribute payments, mostly in the form of grain and goods, were modest, and the Chinese influence was lightly felt.

The Golden Era

The Okinawans may well have appreciated the cultural influence of the Chinese. Indeed,

they adopted many cultural features from China, and many Chinese traders settled in the prefecture of Naha, Okinawa. The Okinawans enjoyed a long period of peace, prosperity, and cultural advance during this association with the Chinese, and the era became known as the Golden Era of Ryukyuan history.

In 1429, fifty-seven years after the Okinawans began paying tribute to China, King Sho Hashi united the three rival kingdoms, thereby providing the basis for even stronger cultural and trading ties between China and Okinawa. To this day, the family crest of the Sho Hashi is used in Okinawa martial arts to symbolize their Okinawan heritage.

The Golden Era reached its peak with the reign of King Sho Shin, when particularly strong diplomatic relations were developed between Okinawa and imperial China. During this time Okinawa became an independent nation, and the royal court was established in the prefecture of Shuri.

In the thirteenth year of King Sho Shin's reign, a monument was erected proclaiming the Eleven Distinctions of the Age. These were laws designed to ensure peace and harmony between the three rival kingdoms of Okinawa. Of particular importance from the martial arts point of view was the Fourth Distinction, which stated that private ownership of weapons and the use of arms were strictly prohibited.

The Ryukyu Islands had few natural resources from which to produce articles of trade. Therefore, Ryukyuan men became seamen and provided many of the maritime services necessary to sustain the merchant trade between China, Japan, and other countries of Southeast Asia. Okinawa literally became the center of this seaborne commerce because of its ideal location for transshipments of goods to mainland Asia and other parts of the known world at that time.

The arrival of European traders—first the Portuguese, followed by the Spanish, British, and Dutch—brought better ships and improved navigation methods. These advancements permitted longer voyages; thus the Okinawan stopover diminished in importance, and Ryukyuan commerce began to decline. By the early 1600s, it had dwindled to a limited trade between China and Japan through the Ryukyu Islands.

The Development of Okinawan Martial Arts

Little is known about the empty-hand and kobudo arts before 1600. It is known, however, that the establishment of official Chinese-Okinawan relations in 1372 greatly intensified Chinese cultural influence on the island. This opened the door for the teachings of *ch'uan fa*, a form of unarmed combat that included many of the fighting techniques preserved by the Shaolin monks of China.

Nevertheless, in spite of the influx of ch'uan fa and other powerful Chinese influences, many historians and masters feel that there is a strong indigenous element in the martial arts that eventually emerged on Okinawa.

For example, the Ryukyuan martial art of *tode* (toe-day), a form of fist-fighting that is similar to modern boxing, is considered truly indigenous to the Ryukyu Islands and, more specifically, to Okinawa. Many of the closed-fist and open-hand fighting methods as well as the traditional kobudo practiced today in Okinawan martial arts are clearly represented in some of the traditional and cultural dances of the Ryukyu Islands.

Documents recording the history of Chinese-Okinawan relations are scarce. Such documents were often destroyed when a new king came to power in Okinawa, and a large proportion of the chronicles that did exist were lost in World War II, when the Okinawan National Archives were destroyed. Thus, the oral transmission of knowledge from empty-hand and kobudo practitioners is often the most informative and reliable source of historical information.

Since the Chinese writing system has been used in Okinawa for centuries, it is possible to learn something of the relationship between tode and ch'uan fa from a comparison of the written Chinese characters used for their names.

Tode was written with the characters (ideograms) meaning fist technique. Ch'uan fa was written with the characters which denoted

open hand technique. It can be surmised therefore that early Okinawan martial artists began to supplement their own closed-fist methods of fighting with the open-hand methods of ch'uan fa introduced by the Chinese. Since modern karate is a combination of both closed-fist and open-hand techniques, it is logical to assume that this early blending formed the basis of Okinawan karate and some of the foundation for the kobudo weapon fighting arts.

Another interesting conjecture about the origin of the tode and some of the earlier kobudo arts is that the first king of Okinawa, Shunten, being the son of a feudal-age Japanese samurai warrior of the Minamoto clan, could have introduced some of the Japanese *budo* (military way) arts to the native subjects and guards in his court. These arts could have blended with any of the pugilistic arts that were current in Okinawa at the time.

In any case, the roots of tode can be gleaned from traditional dances that have survived in Okinawa, which include movements that are smooth and flowing yet rigid and circular. Certain similarities to the dance movements can be observed in the early martial arts of *naha-te* (naha-hand), *tomari-te* (tomari-hand) and *shuri-te* (shuri-hand). These empty-hand fighting arts were indigenous to the Okinawan prefectures or villages of Naha, Tomari, and Shuri. The Chinese character read as *te* is translated as hand. Attached to Naha, Tomari, or Shuri, it represented the predominate style of empty-hand art indigenous to the area of that township.

The word te, or hand, became synonymous with the empty-hand martial arts of Okinawa, and in many of the martial arts circles that formed throughout Okinawa's history, this term replaced the original term tode altogether. Thus any of the empty-hand martial arts simply became know as te.

Since Chinese ch'uan fa and Okinawan tode or te were arts that mainly involved the striking of blows, study of them necessitated work with open-hand and closed-fist striking methods, blocking and counterattacking maneuvers, and kicking. It is logical to assume that the early forms of these arts also incorporated defenses against swords as well as other objects that could be used for striking, such as staffs, walking sticks, and even long-handled weapons such as spears.

It is virtually certain that prior to 1600, many unique methods of defending against armed assault had been developed. As a means of protection against robbers or other marauders, Okinawan farmers and fisherman devised ways of combining their te arts with weaponlike applications of their tools and fishing implements. This evolution eventually led to the practice of *kobudo*, or ancient weapon way.

Many of the early techniques of the Okinawans are reflected in kata that have been preserved and passed down to the present generation. These kata reflect defenses against the sword, spear, halberd, or other bladed weapons of a military nature. Against these, the Okinawans employed the six-foot-long staff, short sickle, handle of the small grist mill, boat oar, fishing gaff, and a variety of other makeshift weapons from tools that were at their disposal. These were the first kobudo weapons.

Japan and the Ryuku Islands

Japan's interest in the Ryukyu Islands has been recorded back to the twelfth century, even before China began to extract tribute from Okinawa. Japan's traditional interest in the islands was based on the fact that the first king of Okinawa, Shunten, was partly of Japanese ancestry. It was not until 1451, however, that the Japanese began to play an integral role in Okinawan history, when the Okinawans also began paying tribute to the Japanese, much for the same reasons that they paid it to the Chinese.

Okinawa, being a peaceful nation and lacking military might to deter advances from larger and stronger forces, complied with the demands of the Japanese while still paying allegiance to China. Although these countries struggled for power in the Far East, this created little friction between them. The primary reason why Okinawa was not a prime

factor in this rivalry was that it had very little in the way of natural resources that either country could exploit. Its primary value was as a transshipping port. So even with the open hostility between China and Japan, they still traded clandestinely using Okinawan ports as a neutral place to make these transactions. Beyond this, Okinawa had no logistical or strategic importance to either of these great military powers.

It was not until 1609, some 158 years after Okinawa had begun paying tribute to Japan, that Japanese military force was exerted against the Ryukyu Islands. For several reasons, China did not try to resist this encroachment. Mainly, China felt that an expedition to Okinawa would divide its sea forces, which were already diminished by several unsuccessful battles with the Japanese. On two occasions, China had lost thousands of warriors and ships during unsuccessful attempts to invade Japan. Protection of the Ryukyu Islands was simply not worth the division of forces that might result from further conflict with the Japanese so far from the Chinese mainland.

The Satsuma Reign of Okinawa

In 1600, the great Satsuma clan, led by the Shimazu family, and the Tokugawa clan were engaged in a bloody civil war. The eventual victor of this war was the Tokugawa clan. It was customary at the time to allow the defeated family to retain its feudal territories, with its leader holding the position of an outside lord (*tozama daimyo*) while pledging allegiance to the ruling power. However, because of the great military power of the Shimazu family and the Satsuma regime and the strong allegiance of their samurai warriors, to alleviate the possibility of recurring conflict, the Tokugawa government decreed that the survivors of the Satsuma clan should be permitted to colonize and control the Ryukyu Islands.

The goals of this plan were twofold.

Lord Tokugawa felt that hostilities between the ruling administration and the defeated Satsuma clan could be prevented by exiling the Satsuma to the Ryukyu Islands. By doing so, he deemed that the Satsuma clan could retain their dignity and thus continue to offer their allegiance to the new government from afar. Secondly, this decree was intended to punish the Okinawans for not supporting Japan or supplying it with materials for its abortive attack on China in 1592.

Before the arrival of the Satsuma clan in 1609, the Ryukyu Island people were living in peaceful coexistence with their Chinese and Japanese neighbors, not aware of the decisions being made by the Tokugawa administration. They were still lawfully abiding by the Fourth Distinction of the Age doctrine established by King Sho Shin, which prohibited ownership of weapons and the use of arms. Since the decree, all weapons had been collected by the authorities of the king and stored at the castle in the prefecture of Shuri. The weapons were maintained by the castle swordsmith in the event they would ever be needed for the defense of the island.

The invasion of Okinawa by the Satsuma clan in 1609 was both swift and effective. As the Satsuma subdued Okinawa, it also made territorial claims to all of the Ryukyu Islands to the north. The Okinawan king was seized, the castle at Shuri was captured, and many of the weapons stored there were never utilized in the island's defense. The Okinawans made a brave attempt to protect their king and their land, but it was in vain.

To insure the cooperation of the Okinawan people, their king was transported to Japan as a "diplomatic representative," which actually meant he was a hostage. He literally became a puppet king by ruling his people from the Japanese mainland. He carried out Lord Tokugawa's orders from Japan through the Satsuma's control of the island.

The Ryukyuans cooperated with the Japanese, but only because of obedience to their king. However, he discovered too late that harsh restrictions were imposed on his people by the new rulers of his islands. Many prohibitions were enacted and rigidly enforced by the

Satsuma regime. The ban on all weapons, ceremonial or otherwise, was reimposed. Any arms found in Okinawan possession were confiscated and the owners were punished.

The anger and bitterness created by this oppression initially led to many clashes between the Japanese authorities and the Okinawans. It was during this period that many makeshift and inconspicuous weapons were devised by the Okinawans. However, early on only the empty-hand forms of self-defense were used in an oftentimes futile attempt to defend themselves and their land. The Satsuma samurai, with their policing abilities and martial superiority, punished even the slightest infractions of the rules.

For two years the king was held hostage in Japan, but he was returned to Okinawa after arrangements had been made with the Tokugawa administration to insure the islands would remain under control of the Satsuma clan. After the king returned in 1611, he was forced to serve as a puppet for the Satsuma.

Okinawan Martial Arts Go Underground

In the meantime, the weapon arts of Okinawa were gradually and secretly taking shape. Twenty years after the Satsuma invasion, the first Okinawan rebellion took place in 1629 when the various ch'uan fa and tode societies banded together. These secret groups of adherents of both open-hand and closed-fist methods shared knowledge to create what today has become known simply as te. This was essentially a new fighting style based on real as opposed to theoretical applications found in some of the arts imported from China, which derived inspiration from birds, insects, and animals. This was done so the most deadly styles of practical self-defense could be used against the better-armed Japanese samurai warriors. These secret groups later expanded their self-defense concepts to tools, fishing implements, and utilitarian devices that would otherwise go unnoticed by anyone who did not know their true purpose.

It soon became obvious to the Satsuma government that the secret cultivation of these fighting methods posed a serious threat to its position of power. Thus any practitioner of the empty-hand and weapon arts, if captured, was punished severely, including being put to death.

As more infractions occurred, the Satsuma imposed even harsher penalties on the Ryukyuans. Higher taxes and greater amounts of tribute were among the punitive measures imposed by the rulers.

On Miyako, a coastal island near Okinawa, Satsuma officers erected four-foot-high tax stones. After Okinawan boys grew to the height of the stone, they were required to pay yearly taxes. Girls who reached this height were required to contribute a large amount of weaving each year.

On Yanaguni, another Ryukyu island, the tax officials established several ways of exacting high production from the population. Each year at a particular time, the officials would sound a gong, which signaled for the people to gather in the center of a field called Issoda with their tribute. The elderly and sick who were unable to report were sought out and slain.

Near the seashore of Kubuwari, another island, there was a crack in the rocks four yards wide. Every pregnant woman on the island was forced to leap across the crack. Those who could not complete the jump plummeted to their death on the rocky shores hundreds of feet below.

The Okinawan people were forced to endure such extreme hardships in order to meet the increasing tax and tribute requirements of the Satsuma regime. At the same time, they had to continue to pay tribute to the Chinese, who showed no interest in the Okinawan's welfare. Since the Satsuma still saw the need to trade with China, they permitted these payments to continue, also without regard for the welfare of the burdened subjects.

Thus, the Okinawans had every reason to continue their resistance. Although a full-scale battle never materialized between the indigenous Okinawans and the Satsuma samurai, isolated skirmishes took place in many areas of the islands.

The actions and edicts of the Satsumas only served to strengthen the determination of the

Okinawans. Their practice of the martial arts became more intensive, and they extended their clandestine training in the art of te and kobudo. The three leading schools, located at Shuri, Naha, and Tomari, went underground even deeper as the Satsuma took measures to eradicate all subversive factions on the islands. Highly effective ways of using the body and weapon-tools to maim or kill were developed and refined in utmost secrecy.

Within the first 30 years after the Satsuma clan took power, the study of martial arts had become so secretive that only trusted friends and immediate family members were permitted to train with known martial arts masters. Some even went to China to study and bring this new knowledge back to their homeland.

Also within that first 30 years, the written chronicling of most of the forms of Okinawan martial arts was halted, not to be resumed until well into the 1700s. This period of over 90 years of martial development thus remains obscure. Today, only the oral traditions serve as a resource for uncovering the early indigenous techniques of the old Okinawan kobudo weapons.

The ones that have been passed down through the various schools and dedicated disciples have proven to be very efficient. The fact that this tradition still exists demonstrates that the early teachers and students of the secret kobudo arts were truly dedicated to their cause. Through this dedication they were able to ensure that their arts would be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

Okinawan Martial Arts Emerge

After 1724, information on the history of Okinawan kobudo became available once more from court records. Much of the tension and rebellious unrest among the Okinawans had subsided during the reign of King Sho Tei (1669-1709), even though the king remained a puppet of the Satsuma overlords. During his reign, positions in the Satsuma government became available to native Okinawans who had received some education and acquired knowledge of government matters. Many of these individuals even changed their Okinawan names to Japanese so they would fit in with the government in a more traditional way. Also, some of the Satsuma samurai warriors had begun to marry Okinawan women, and their culture gradually synthesized with the culture on the Japanese mainland.

The villages were now starting to run in a more organized fashion, and some of the Okinawan people were beginning to prosper under this stabilized government. The majority of the Okinawan people, however, were still powerless and were kept in a position of subservience to the Japanese, who still controlled most of the businesses and conducted all important government affairs.

Although the majority of the martial arts of the Ryukyu Islands remained somewhat secretive, after 1724 several noted experts of Okinawa-te took extended journeys to various parts of China to learn other methods that could be incorporated into their own arts. Upon their return, these men introduced their new knowledge to serious devotees. During the latter part of the 1700s and into the mid 1800s, the empty-hand and kobudo arts evolved into unique styles that represented the indigenous techniques of the areas of their origin. It was at that time that the arts from the Naha region became known as naha-te, those from the Shuri area as shuri-te, and those of the Tomari region as tomari-te.

These arts evolved even more as the power and influence of the Satsuma declined and the country's affairs normalized under the Edo Period. This was an important time for the development of martial arts on Okinawa. Skilled Okinawan martial artists exchanged knowledge with warriors who were well versed in the traditional budo arts of Japan. Other famous martial artists became constables, gate guards at the Shuri castle, bodyguards for government and court officials, and even instructors who taught with distinction in villages.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Okinawa became a port-of-call for expeditions from such Western countries as Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the United States.

Commodore Matthew Perry from the United States made his historic visit to Okinawa in 1853, arriving with his fleet of naval steamships at the Tomari port area.

The reason for Commodore Perry's visit was to establish relations with the Japanese government by offering friendship, opening trade, providing aid, and asking for permission to establish a U.S. naval base on Okinawa. (The last request was denied; the others were granted.) Treaties were signed in 1854, and the way was opened to trade and cultural exchange with the Western world.

Perry's officers were the first Americans to get a firsthand look at the samurai sword and the weapon-tools of the Okinawan people. This meeting had a tremendous impact on the martial arts world.

Japan Annexes Okinawa

In 1871, the Japanese government decided to take over Okinawa and make it a full prefecture rather than a controlled satellite country. The Ryukyu king was brought to Japan, placed in a position of high office, and presented with a substantial pension. Also at this time, the centuries-old tributary payments to China ended.

The Japanese emperor became the sole ruler of Okinawa, bringing to a close the reign of the Satsuma clan. Despite the prominent position of the Satsumas in Okinawan society, all important government positions were put in the hands of the Japanese to ensure that administration and policy were run in accordance with the Japanese government. Edicts that had been put in place under the Meiji reform of 1868 abolished the samurai caste. All of the samurai warriors were required to cut off their top knots and relinquish their swords, never to wear them again.

In 1879, the entire Ryukyu Island chain was officially declared a province of Japan. All prior edicts and legal statutes were rescinded, and Okinawa was fully established as a part of the Japanese nation.

Shortly after annexation, the Japanese government sent assistance to Okinawa to try to improve living and working conditions and for the first time truly gain their loyalty as citizens rather than subjects. Industry was brought in, and many Okinawans developed technical skills in addition to the farming and fishing skills they had learned from their forefathers. A major program of education and instruction in the Japanese language was inaugurated.

In 1905, martial arts training was approved as a subject to be taught in the school system. It had finally and formally emerged from its underground tradition and was recognized as a true Okinawan cultural treasure.

This put an end to centuries of clandestine kobudo and empty-handed self-defense practices. The experts and masters still had reservations about just anyone learning their once guarded arts, and even to this day there is a fairly stringent protocol in rank and association requirements before one is fully accepted and acknowledged as an individual who has mastered them.

It was not until after World War II, when Japan was defeated by the United States, that some of the more restrictive doors were opened to the world at large. American serviceman who were fortunate enough to be stationed in Okinawa and Japan during the occupation and immediately after are today considered to be the pioneers of martial arts that are practiced around the globe.

The repressive Satsuma reign in Okinawa lasted 259 years. Many Okinawans sought to preserve their independence and dignity, though they were intimidated, imprisoned, and killed in their struggles. Nothing, however, deterred them from developing ingenious makeshift weapons from their farm tools and fishing implements. The result is the kobudo arts that we study and practice today.

A DEVASTATING KOBUDO ARSENAL

Because of the cloak of secrecy that has surrounded the martial arts of Okinawa for the better part of 350 years, little has been written about the awesome array of weapon-tools created by the kobudo masters. This portion of

the book will familiarize you with the entire arsenal of kobudo weapons so you can better apply the strategies and tactics outlined in Book I to the exciting art of kobudo fighting.

Since Far Eastern philosophies and cultures are so different from those of the Western world, it is befitting to paint a clear picture of the meaning of kobudo from the Far Eastern perspective. First, you must realize that the terms and names used by the Okinawan people when expressing an idea or describing a weapon usually defy typical Western reasoning. In some cases, these descriptions are combinations of Chinese, Japanese, and the Okinawan dialect known as Hogen. In other instances they may be singular descriptions of weapons or their use from the specific country where they were thought to have originated. In either case, these descriptions provide significant evidence of how both China and Japan had a synthesizing effect on Okinawa.

In the Japanese language, *kobudo* literally translates to ancient weapon way(s) [ko = ancient, bu = weapon, do = way]. *Kobu-jutsu* [ko = ancient, bu = weapon, jutsu = art], also known as *Ryukyu-jutsu* [Ryukyu = Okinawan Islands, jutsu = art], is synonymous with the weapon training, practice, and proliferation indigenous to Okinawa. (*Bu* can also be expressed as martial or military, depending on how it is used to describe certain concepts.)

Associated with kobu-jutsu are many Chinese, Japanese, or Hogen names that describe certain practices or the weapons themselves. As an example, Okinawan *kobudo bo kata* would translate to mean a traditional ancient weapon ways sequence of prearranged staff movements that would work effectively under actual combat conditions.

Let's break that down so that you will understand the basic assemblage of terms (and their applications, and meanings) used throughout this book:

Okinawan
(the nationality or origin of the item)
+ kobudo
(ancient weapon ways as practiced traditionally)
+ bo
(staff—it could be any of the staff weapons unless specified in length)
+ kata
(a prearranged pattern of offensive and defensive fighting techniques that have been proven effective under actual weapon fighting conditions).

To provide you with a greater comprehension of Okinawan weaponry, a pronunciation guide of weapon names, terms, and associated expressions have been included in Appendix A.

Kobudo is not a style so much as it is the actual practice of traditional weaponry skills. In the narrow sense, the ancient weapon way is often associated only with the traditional weapon arts that actually originated on Okinawa (traditional weapons being those that have been passed on from teacher to student). In the broader sense, kobudo could mean any weapon art that has an ancient Okinawan or Japanese heritage.

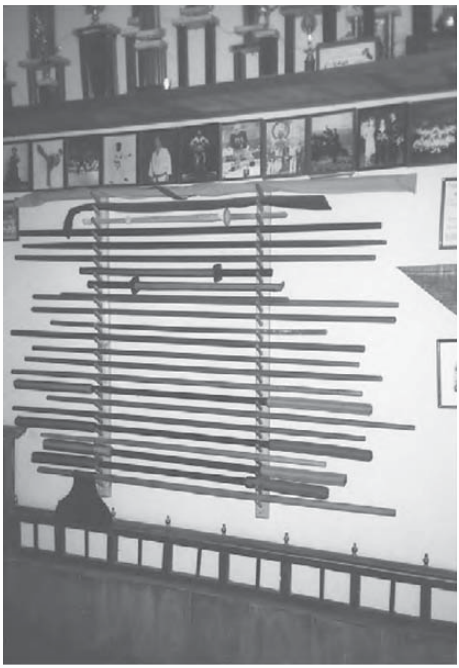
KOBUDO STAFF WEAPONS

There are a wide variety of staffs in Okinawa's kobudo bo arsenal. It is so specialized that each length of staff has its own unique martial applications. As one became proficient at one style of bo, he could move up to another level until the entire arsenal of staff weapons was mastered.

Kushakubo

The *kushakubo* is a nine-foot-long staff. A *shaku* is a unit of measure in Okinawa. One shaku is approximately 12 inches in length. In Japanese or Okinawan counting, *ku* is one of the words used to denote the number nine. Thus, the kushakubo is a nine-foot bo. It is the longest of all of the Okinawan *bojutsu* staff weapon-tools.

In Okinawa prior to the early 1600s, staffs and hardwood farm implements were primarily made of Chinese white oak or red maple. After



the invasion of the Satsuma clan in 1609, most of the hardwoods were supplied by Japan, and the most common was Japanese red oak. When the kushakubo was being incorporated into the kobudo arts, it is believed that most of the various lengths of staffs and wooden-handled farm implements were made of Japanese red oak. Even today in Okinawa and Japan, red oak is considered the best for kobudo weapons because of its extremely tight grain and toughness, making it capable of enduring years of impact against other weapons. It was virtually impossible to cut through this hardwood with even the sharpest of samurai swords.

Kushakubo came in a variety of shapes, but the most common was completely round with a smooth, polished surface. Due to the high density of the red oak, it was rugged beyond belief. With that durability, weapon makers realized it was possible to produce other shapes and configurations. This resulted in the *kakubo* (four-sided staff), *rokukakubo* (six sides), and the *hakkakubo* (eight sides) as well as the round bamboo *takebo* and the sturdy, flexible rattan known as the *rattanbo*.

In addition to the basic shapes, craftsmen tapered the ends of the fighting staffs to insure that if an enemy grabbed either end during combat, the wielder would have the advantage of a better and more secure grip. The enemy's hand would have a tendency to slip off toward the tapered end while the user could maintain a firmer grip in all respects. Almost all of the different lengths of Okinawan red oak bo had this tapering.

Rokushakubo

The *rokushakubo* is six feet in length and generally has the same physical characteristics as the kushakubo. It is the favored length of most Okinawan practitioners of the staff arts. In fact, the majority of kobudo bojutsu kata practiced around the world are done with six-foot staffs.

The reason for this is partly because its maneuverability allows twirls, strikes, and blocking/countering techniques without worrying about clearance between the ground and the weapon when it is in motion. Kobudo practitioners can maneuver the weapon in small quarters and still achieve enough impact power to make their techniques effective. This is not the case with the nine-foot kushakubo. Although the range of the rokushakubo is three feet shorter than the kushakubo, all of the two-hand and most of the single-hand techniques can be applied in self-defense.

Today, because of the tremendous exposure the rokushakubo has had and because of its dominance in the evolution of the Okinawan martial arts, kobudo masters usually teach it first to serious students. At least in part, this practice is based on the belief that the bo is one of the basic tools, and in an emergency, something resembling a bo is almost always readily available in almost every environment.

Yonshakubo (Jo)

The *yonshakubo*, a shorter version of the

rokushakubo, is four feet in length and between one inch and one and one-quarter inch in diameter. Like other Okinawan staff weapons, it is made of Japanese red oak. As opposed to the kushakubo and the rokushakubo, the yonshakubo shaft remains constant in diameter, although occasionally one or both ends are tapered to a sharp point.

As the yonshakubo became refined as a weapon of self-defense, a complete art unto itself was developed for its use. Hence, it became known as the *jo* because of the influence of the Japanese samurai who used it in the mainland Japanese schools that taught it. This style of shorter staff fighting was known as *jojutsu* (art of the jo) and was taught to the samurai from a very early age. Kobudo experts in Okinawa adopted some of the jo techniques and added their own unique touches to this self-defense weapon.

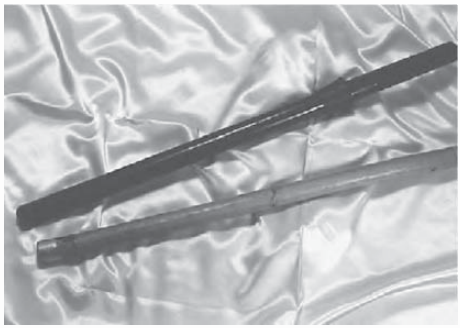
One who was skilled with this medium-range staff weapon was capable of executing some effective in-close techniques that were not possible with the lengthier six and nine-foot versions, including joint locks, restraining holds, strangulations, disarms, trips, nerve point attacks, painful lever locks, and an assortment of close-range blocks and counterattacks. The jo was somewhat limited, however, when it came to executing powerful swinging and striking techniques because of its shorter length.

What was perhaps one of the most distinguishing characteristics of the jo was that it was preferred by the older and more knowledgeable kobudo practitioners. The leverage tactics and nerve-point attacks it made possible made up for what the elderly lacked in brute power and strength.

Sanshakbuo

The *sanshakubo* is three feet long and is commonly referred to as the *hanbo*. Early sanshakubos were made of Chinese white oak and red maple. After 1609, Japanese red oak versions emerged. Some are made with rattan and bamboo, but they generally are not as sturdy and durable as the dense oak versions. Its diameter is fairly constant the whole length of the shaft and ranges from one to one and one-half inch in thickness, depending on the preference of the wielder.

Kobudo practitioners usually used these bo in pairs, but they could be used singly in conjunction with tode empty-hand self-defense



strategies. Some early kobudo experts drilled a small hole in one end of the bo and attached through it a cord or leather thong 14 to 20 inches in length. This was wrapped around the wrist so that quick release and spinning maneuvers could be employed, much like a single-stick nunchaku.

As a short-range weapon, there were intricate ways in which two sanshakubo could be integrated into double-weapon techniques. Simultaneous block/counters, double strikes, and nerve-point attacks were a specialty of this weapon. Pokes, jabs, thrusts, and the like could be directed to vulnerable targets such as the eyes, throat, groin, temple, and base of the skull.

Tanbo

The *tanbo* is two feet in length and also made of Japanese red oak. In pairs they are referred to as *nitanbo*, and the art of using them is known as *nitan-bojutsu* (the art of nitan bo). Several versions have cord or leather thongs connected to one end that are attached to the user's wrist. This increases the immediate range of the weapon by allowing twirling and spinning maneuvers.

A kobudo fighter had to be extremely skillful and bold to use this weapon effectively, primarily because of its short length and thus close proximity he had to get to his adversary. If the opponent had a weapon of superior range, the tanbo wielder had to be cunning and evasive.

It should be noted that many small farm implements used in Okinawan in the 1600s had handles of the approximate length and diameter of the tanbo. It is reasonable to assume that the short-handled adz, spade, sickle, and hoe could have been adapted to the techniques created for the tanbo. The tanbo was also of the approximate length of the wooden locking bolt pintles used to secure gates and doors in Okinawan houses. Anyone with empty-handed martial arts skills could certainly see the advantages of using the tanbo to defend himself.

Shoshakubo

The *shoshakubo* are extremely close-range

weapons also made from Japanese red oak. Early versions were devised from bamboo, rattan, Chinese white oak, and red maple, but they soon proved to be inferior to the stronger red oak imported from Japan.Most shoshakubo (including the one in the photo, compared with a modern billy club) are completely rounded and range from one to one and a half inches in thickness. They are generally about a foot long and have a smooth, polished shaft. In some cases, they are sharpened to a fine point on one or both ends, making them incredibly lethal at close range. As with all of the close-range staff weapons, the element of surprise was an essential ingredient for these to be effective against greater-range weapons.

KOBUDO SAI

The original *sai* used by the kobudo practitioners of Okinawa were made of iron and weighed between one-half and one pound. The overall length varied between 18 and 22 inches. Over the years many configurations evolved, including custom-forged versions to suit individual users. However, the basic shape and design remained pretty much the same from one sai to another.

A majority of Okinawa's tode fighting methods could be directly applied to the sai. All of the fundamental high, middle, and low blocking methods could be accomplished by maneuvering it in certain positions. The prongs, when gripped properly, could be

flipped outward or inward instantly for striking, thrusting, lunging, ripping, cutting, stabbing, and bludgeoning. When the grips were inverted, the prongs could be used for hooking, gaffing, pinning, and literally tearing the flesh away. Gouging and blinding techniques were also in the sai's arsenal of techniques. It is perhaps one of the most formidable weapons in the kobudo arsenal, especially when wielded by a master.

The sai was unique among Okinawan kobudo weapons because its iron construction made it virtually indestructible when used against bladed weapons such as swords and spears. Since it was usually used in pairs (with a third sai sometimes kept in the sash for backup in case one was thrown or dropped), the versatility of a sai master was greatly enhanced. He could use one for attacking and the other for blocking.

Manji Sai

The *manji sai* is a variation of the traditional sai in which the prongs are inverted in opposite directions and the short handle end has been fully extended and redesigned as a blade. The older versions of this unique weapon-tool were made of iron, but later versions were forged in steel. Some have round, tapered, semipointed blades while others have octagonal or hexagonal shafts. Most manji sai are between 15 and 18 inches in length.

The manji sai is oftentimes referred to as the double-ended dagger, although it is not a dagger in the truest sense of the word. It lacks cutting edges, and it does not have blades, but the tapered shafts on both ends can be sharpened to extremely fine points.

As a weapon the manji sai was quite versatile for both offensive and defensive close-range fighting applications. With practice, the kobudo artist could throw this unusual weapon accurately. Like the traditional sai, it was used in pairs: one for blocking and one for attacks.

By gripping the middle of the shaft so that the prongs extended between the fingers, the manji sai could be used as a gaff for hooking, tearing, ripping, trapping, and slashing. It could be flipped in typical sai fashion so that the sharpened points could also be used for slashing and stabbing. The penetrating ability of the manji sai was excellent as well.

In most of the traditional schools teaching the manji sai today, its use is usually reserved for serious high-ranking black belts who have developed exemplary skills with most of the other Okinawan weapons. For that reason, not many martial arts practitioners are familiar with this strangely configured weapon.

NUNTEBO SPEAR

The *nuntebo* spear is one of the most versatile and dangerous tools in the Ryukyuan weapon-tool arsenal. It was devised by the kobudo masters so that the best qualities of the manji sai and the standard red oak bo could be combined for fighting purposes.

Its general appearance is that of a bo with

the round tapered shaft of the manji sai permanently set into one end, with only two of three inches of one of the blades being visible. It looks like a spear with two opposing prongs affixed opposite each other at the base of the spear blade. In actuality, the nuntebo spear possessed a range equal to that of the Japanese spear (yari), but it had a few distinct advantages over its Japanese cousin.

The nuntebo spear could be used for hooking, ripping, trapping, slashing, poking, stabbing, thrusting, restraining, gaffing, and tearing. It could be used in a swinging and/or twirling fashion, utilizing one of the prongs for gaffing anything that entered its path. Many of the nuntebo's lethal techniques defy description when performed by a skilled exponent of this incredible combination weapon system.

KOBUDO NUNCHAKU

The *nunchaku* is perhaps one of the most popular kobudo weapons that has ever been exported from the Ryukyuan archipelago. The late Bruce Lee popularized this ancient rice flail through his action-adventure martial arts movies. Because of this notoriety, the entire world has learned what an astounding weapon it could be when used properly by a skilled martial artist or kobudo expert.

The nunchaku, in all probability, derives its name from the inventor of this unique weapon, believed to have been Emperor Chao K'uang-yin, founder of the Sung Dynasty of China (960–1126). His name, when taken in the order Yin, Chao, K'uang, has a sound similar to the Okinawan word nunchaku, which is the modern-day term for the weapon. In Hogen, nunchaku literally means two sections of wood.

The history of the invention of the nunchaku by Chao K'uang-yin is quite interesting. Before becoming the first emperor of the Sung Dynasty, he was the commander-in-chief of the armies of the Chou dynasty and a genius in military strategy and fighting techniques. Even after he had usurped imperial power and was established as emperor, Chao K'uang-yin remained proud of his fighting abilities. Whenever there was a new position to be filled on his military staff, he would personally test the applicant in personal combat, often proving himself superior to his lower-ranking commanders. Chao K'uang-yin's favorite weapon in these contests was the long spear.

On one occasion, a brilliant young officer challenged the emperor with a sword and defeated him, cutting the emperor's spear into three pieces. The emperor took the three pieces and used them to devise a three-section staff. Later, he created another weapon by connecting only two sections, naming it the *ta shao tse*. After mastering the ta shao tse, he defeated the young officer who had beaten him earlier with the sword.

Emperor Chao K'uang-yin's original two-section staff was composed of one section about 40 inches long and another about 14 inches, linked together by a metal chain about eight inches long. In all probability, this was the way the weapon appeared when it arrived in Okinawa from China prior to 1600.

Once it arrived in Okinawa, the ta shao tse went through many changes in design. The two sections of hardwood were shortened and connected with about four inches of cord, rope, braided horse hair, or metal chain. The wooden sections varied in both length and configuration: some nunchaku had eight-sided wooden sections, others six-sided, while others were completely round. Later, the lengths were

tailored to suit each user's arm length. Other versions evolved with spikes protruding from each end, which allowed for slashing and cutting techniques.

The range and methods of application of the nunchaku varied with the expertise of the wielder. By gripping both sections in the same hand, it could be utilized in much the same fashion as a club. By gripping only one end and twirling or swinging the other, its range was increased to the length of both hardwood sections, the connecting cord, and the reach of the arm when the weapon was in motion. These characteristics made the nunchaku desirable because it could be used to neutralize the advantage of opponent's who wielded weapons of greater lengths.

In many parts of Asia, a similar implement but of a shorter length had been used for agricultural purposes, specifically as a flail tool for removing the husk from harvested rice. After the dried unhusked rice was placed in woven baskets or large wooden containers, it was flailed until all of the husk was pounded away from the kernels. The agricultural nunchaku made this tedious process much easier to perform, making it a popular farm implement with the rice farmers on the Ryukyu archipelago.

From the seventeenth century on, the nunchaku was thought of as both an agricultural tool and a standard weapon in the kobudo arsenal. Over a period of time, almost every conceivable martial application was adapted to its use. Some of the more insidious martial artists designed styles of nunchaku that had three and even four sections to increase the overall range of the weapon and improve its impact force in much the same fashion that a whip would be used.

Regardless of the shape, style, or configuration, the weapon had essentially four distinct categories of applications: 1) catching and trapping, 2) twirling, 3) striking and blocking, and 4) restraining and choking. Naturally, an expert in the use of the nunchaku realized the advantages of integrating these maneuvers in different combinations. Variations of blocking, striking, catching, trapping, twirling, and countering all sorts of attacks were an essential part of his arsenal.

As strange as it might seem, especially to those who have seen the flashy cinematic use of the weapon, in real combat the nunchaku is not used in a fanciful manner. The real techniques are extremely quick, short, and simple. Twirls, spins, and other flamboyant maneuvers are ineffective in real kobudo warfare.

San Setsu Kon

The *san setsu kon* is a variation of the standard two-section nunchaku. It consists of three sections of hardwood joined by a coupling device such as a cord or section of chain. The entire length can vary between 30 inches to beyond 7 feet. The rounded or multisided sections of hardwood also vary in length.

As with most articulated weapons, the wielder of the san setsu kon had to be extremely skilled if he was to be truly effective in realistic combat against lengthy polearms or staff weapons. Kobudo experts who had mastered the traditional two-sectioned nunchaku often preferred the longer and more complex versions.

Tactically, this cudgel-type weapon was used in much the same way as the articulated weapons in the Chinese weapons arsenal. Spinning, twirling, entrapping, looping, swinging, and even reaping techniques were among the most common ploys used by the san setsu kon fighter.

Of course, the weapon's range could be

regulated for tactics at closer ranges by controlling how many of the three sections were fed out during the engagement. It took a lot of dexterity and skill to instantly alter the range in a given situation.

Yon Setsu Kon

The *yon setsu kon* is a variation of the standard three-section san setsu kon consisting of four sections of hardwood connected by a cord or chain. The red oak sections are usually round with a consistent diameter. One of the most common versions is the same length as the traditional san setsu kon. However, the four connected sections make it possible for the wielder to use smaller circles when attempting the twirling and whipping techniques in the confines of a smaller space.

For offensive applications beyond arms' reach, the weapon could be gripped by one or more of the sections and swung in much the same fashion as the solid six-foot bo. Once the right momentum was attained for the weight and length of a particular yon setsu kon, a state of rigidity was established as long as the weapon remained in motion.

This weapon's unwieldy nature could greatly exceed the ability of those who were not accomplished at maneuvering it. Only the most skilled of kobudo practitioners dared to master this unpredictable weapon.

KOBUDO TONFA

The *tonfa*, or *tuifa* (handle) as it was known in Okinawa, was originally a wooden handle fitted into a hole on the side of a millstone used by the Ryukyuans for milling grain into flour. It consisted of a shaft between 15 and 20 inches long and a short side handle about 6 inches from the end. The entire tonfa was constructed of Chinese white oak, red maple, or Japanese red oak. The shaft varied in shape and thickness according to the hole in the millstone. Usually the cross-section was half-moon shaped, square, or rectangular, but some were completely round. The side handle was shorter, had a cylindrical grip with a large knob on the end, and was secured at a right angle

to the main body of the tonfa.

As a makeshift weapon-tool, the tonfa is perhaps one of the most underrated weapons in the kobudo arsenal because it simply does not look like an intimidating implement that one would equate with any practical self-defense need. This innocent looking gristmill handle, in actuality, is unparalleled when it comes to versatility and adaptation to the empty-hand tode arts. In addition, it has all of the necessary offensive and defensive characteristics to contend with bladed and polearm weapons.

A tonfa master was one of the most devastating opponents that anyone could ever expect to encounter. His techniques included blocking, striking, thrusting, poking, spinning, twirling, jabbing, and restraining as well as joint locks and chokes. The length of the tonfa could change dramatically at a mere flip of the wrist. When spun, it could generate speeds in excess of

150 miles per hour. This velocity combined with the mass of the weapon inflicted heavy damage at impact. For that reason the tonfa was known as "spinning fury."

KOBUDO KAMA

The *kama* is simply a short-handled sickle that was used in Okinawa and other Far Eastern countries for a variety of cutting and reaping task. It was used mostly for cutting and harvesting rice, cane, and stalked vegetation and for other chores where a razor-sharp bladed implement was needed. Most of the cutting task was performed by pulling the sharpened blade toward the user.

Structurally, the kama has a sharp, somewhat curved blade attached perpendicularly to a wooden handle. The blade is six to seven inches long, pointed at the tip, and extremely sharp along its lower side. The handle varies in width and length; most are about one inch in diameter and about 14 inches long.

The kama has always been perceived as a weapon during the course of kobudo development. Among the most common fighting adaptations included attaching cords or sections of chain to the ends of the handle so that it could be spun and twirled. It was also mounted to the end of a long section of hardwood such as a bo so that its range was greatly extended. Blades affixed to each end pointed in opposite directions; weighted and balanced properly, they could be thrown similar to a throwing ax.

The Japanese and some obscure clans of ninja attached chains to the kama and weighted the other end with a metal object so that both ends of the weapon could be used for lassoing an opponent or his weapon and then closing in for the kill with the kama itself.

When the simple kama was wielded in pairs, it became a very lethal weapon. The blades made it possible to block and/or trap the opponent's weapon while counterattacking with the other kama. Both could be utilized to execute multiple attacks to different vital areas or perform double block.

The kama's red oak handles were so durable that they could withstand a blow from other weapons without being severed in two. Once a block was executed, the kamajutsu artist could penetrate the attacker's defense perimeter with some lethal follow-up

maneuvers in very short order.

Traditionally, the kama is taught only to the most advanced kobudo students. It is considered so lethal that a novice or one who is not exceptionally skilled in the empty-hand martial arts is certain to injure himself while practicing with it. It is easy to make a simple mistake and sever vital arteries or cut other parts of the body. It is essential, therefore, that anyone who wants to learn this dangerous weapon have a very good instructor and excellent control of the hands and arms.

Nichokama

The *nichokama* was used in Okinawa and other Asian countries as a self-defense weapon. However, it was almost exclusively in the Ryukyu Islands where it acquired the reputation as a true kobudo weapon.

Essentially, the nichokama is comprised of two standard-length kama connected at the gripping end of the handles with a chain or cord 6 to 10 feet in length (as in the photo comparing the nichokama to the standard nunchaku). Chain was usually preferred over cord because it increased the heft of the weapon when it came to spinning and twirling it. Also, because the small-link chain prevented the nichokama from snagging or becoming tangled during feed-out techniques, they gradually replaced the cords altogether.

An array of feed-out tactics could be employed using this weapon. The chain could be wrapped in a coil over the shoulder and around the bottom of the elbow, leaving the other hand to maneuver the bladed handle section as it was spun out at the desired distance. By using various spins and twirls, it was possible to attack or defend using figure eight patterns, lateral or vertical circular twirls, or any combination thereof. Combining all of these techniques with single-kama manipulations made the nichokama a formidable weapon. However, it could not be used by one who lacked coordination, courage, or confidence.

Kama Kusari

The *kama kusari* is an ordinary kama attached to a lengthy section of cord. In the early days of Ryukyuan kobudo development, this cord was made of sisal hemp, rope, or horsehair. Today, nylon or braided cotton fiber rope is used. This cord varies between 8 and 12 feet in length; the most common length is about 10 feet. The opposite end of the cord is connected to a weighty object such as a small stone with a hole drilled through the middle or a piece of round or cylindrical cast or forged iron.

Regardless of the shape or configuration of the counterweight, it serves the purpose of helping the cord unravel smoothly while supplying the necessary momentum for producing greater impact when the spinning kama is flung. Naturally, the effective range of the kama kusari is dependent upon the length of this weighted cord.

From the kobudo weapon fighting perspective, the kama kusari was deceptive because of the element of surprise that could be incorporated into its attacks and counterattacks. These became even more apparent when the cord was replaced with a section of chain in much the same fashion as the nichokama. After this alteration, the kusari kama came into its own and was officially established as a complete kobudo art recognized by most of the Ryukyuan weapon experts.

KOBUDO FIST-LOAD WEAPONS

A fist load is defined as any short, rounded object that protrudes from each end of a tightly

grasped hand. These hand-held implements were used exclusively for self-defense at the mid and close ranges.

Although almost every country in the world has its own distinct version of the fist load, their usage was popularized in Okinawa and Japan, where they were incorporated into empty-hand styles of martial arts. Other countries refer to them as short clubs, bastinados, hand bats, billy clubs, blackjacks, bludgeons, clavi, cosh, ferules, knobkerries, saps, and yawara.

Many of the Okinawan fist-load weapons were first discovered by American servicemen stationed in the Ryukyuan Islands after World War II. GIs who began the study of judo, jujutsu, and karate while stationed in the Far East gradually became acquainted with the more weapon-oriented self-defense after reaching a level of proficiency in these arts. They discovered that kobudo of any nature was reserved for individuals who had shown dedication to their empty-hand styles of martial arts. It was then, and only then, that they were exposed to these close-range combative tools.

This section will cover many of the earlier forms of fist-load weapons devised by Japanese and Okinawan kobudo masters.

Chize Kun Bo

The *chize kun bo* is considered to be the first form of fist load to evolve on Okinawa. It was the precursor to almost every small hand-held defense weapon that has ever been developed in the Ryukyuan Islands.

The chize kun bo was constructed by connecting a short knotted section of sisal hemp rope, horse hide, or braided horsehair through two holes drilled near the middle section of a short (about six inches long), round, hardwood stave. The looped cord or leather section formed a finger loop that extended perpendicular from the center of the rounded wooden shaft. When the cord was knotted on the opposite section of the stave it provided a permanent or fixed flexible ring hole for the wielder's middle finger to be inserted. This insured that the fist load could not be accidentally knocked or forcefully taken off of the user's hand.

As the tode and te empty-hand martial arts began to thrive on Okinawa, part of the traditional training included conditioning the hands and other parts of the body that impacted with an attacker. The training consisted of striking into piles of small stones, rice, or beans, and punching a makiwara (rice-rope-wrapped punching board) until thick calluses were

developed on all of the striking surfaces. Large, callused knuckles, thick calcium deposits along the arm and shin bones, feet that were toughened by continual kicking, and even finger tips that had been hardened through years of rigorous pounding left the empty-hand weapons so conditioned that anyone exposed to this grueling training could often break bricks, boards, and roofing tiles.

In time, more moderate empty-hand te and tode devotees took a more humane approach to accomplishing the same thing, and the fist-load weapon in Okinawa was born. Besides not leaving the hands, feet, and extremities disfigured, it provided much of the same devastating destructive power.

Callused knuckles and hands were viewed with a certain amount of disdain by the more status-conscious officials and civil servants in Okinawan and Japanese governmental administrations. Some thought these outward signs of martial arts experience were admirable, but more often than not it was associated with individuals who had a lower position in the social stratum. For individuals who had a serious interest in the empty-hand and kobudo arts and who did not wish to be perceived as one with lesser social standing, the fist load weapons were much more to their liking. Besides, the fist load could be carried on their person and quickly brought into play should the need arise to defend themselves. Usually the end results were the same. The opponent was struck with a devastating blow without inflicting any obvious harm to the striker in the way of bruised or disfigured hands.

Tactically, the chize kun bo was used for a number of specialized blocks and strikes to tender-tissue (i.e., nerve and pressure points) targets such as the eyes, nose, temple, neck, solar plexus, and armpit. More powerful techniques could literally crush an adversary's bones. Although this art was more offensive than defensive, there are many instances where traditional empty-hand blocking preceded the actual fist load assault.

Teko

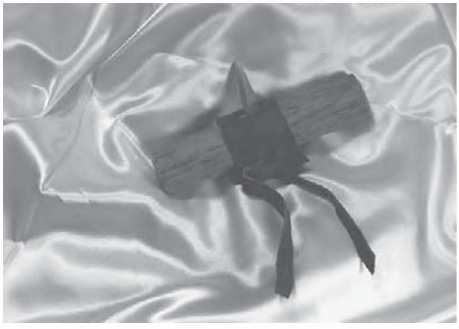
The *teko* was a later variation of fist-load weapon derived from the chize kun bo. In this new weapon, the wooden stave was more artfully rendered from a piece of knotty Japanese red oak or Chinese maple specially selected so that the natural grain of the knot would fit smoothly and snugly into the closed fist. The protrusion or spike would extend through the first (index) and second (middle) finger of the wielder's hand and was sharpened to a tapered point that extended outward beyond the fingers about an inch or so.

When a tree knot of appropriate size and dimensions could not be found, the teko was carved to suit the user's hand dimensions. This was the more common way to make these fist loads.

As time passed, more sophisticated versions of the teko evolved on Okinawa. Some were forged out of crude iron, and others were cast of soft metal such as lead. The Okinawans made molds in the sand that suited the dimensions of their hands, then melted lead or any other soft metal and poured it in. In reality, these were probably the first versions of brass knuckles to ever evolve.

As with all fist-load weapons, the teko was limited to the distance that the wielder could punch or strike. Their most advantageous quality was that they could be readily concealed in the fist and put into use unobtrusively to increase the impact force of strikes.

The teko was definitely more devastating than the chize kun bo simply because it was



configured with a spike as opposed to a simple cord or leather finger loop. There was only one disadvantage—since it did not have a retaining loop, the teko could be forcefully or accidentally lost in an engagement if the hand was struck hard enough. Other than that, it could be employed using all of the typical tode and te empty-hand martial arts techniques.

Tek Chu

The *tek chu* was a metal fist-load weapon incorporating aspects of both the chize kun bo and the teko. Consisting of a metal ring permanently molded onto a metal shaft, tek chu were originally made of lead and other soft metals but later were forged commercially from iron. Some modern versions are made of brass and stainless steel.

These ancient weapons had a sharp, finely honed spike that protruded between the first (index) and second (middle) fingers. The metal ring from which the spike protruded extended outward beyond the knuckles about one and a half inches. The diameter of the spiked ring-loop was between one-eighth and one-quarter of an inch in diameter. This single-piece cast construction was very popular in the 1820s and 1830s in Okinawa and some areas of Japan.

Again, the empty-hand martial arts and this weapon had a symbiotic relationship. The tek chu was the first form of Okinawan fist-load to enter the realm of kobudo in which the user did not necessarily have to be versed in the tode or te forms of self-defense. With the power potential of the insidious protruding spike, any semiskilled or even unskilled pugilist could neutralize a skilled adversary in a serious altercation.

Tekko

The *tekko* is a later fist load that owes its existence to the tek chu. In Okinawa, this more sophisticated weapon was known almost exclusively as the iron fist. The name is quite appropriate since it was made entirely of iron and was designed specifically to enshroud and protect the wielder's entire fist.

Many new and clever uses were developed for this already potent weapon. In fact, it became one of the first fist loads to have sets of kata created exclusively for its use in self-defense. The Taisho Era (1912–1925) saw the development of two traditional tekko kata: Tekko No Kata and Maezato No Tekko (both undoubtedly named after their originator).

The tekko was designed with a complete cast iron band covering the knuckle area of the fist. The band had three (sometimes four) spiked (though sometimes flattened) nodes about three-quarters of an inch in length equally spaced across the top. These were somewhat symbolic of the knuckles on the human hand.

The outer area of the band folded around the hand and was attached to a cylindrical iron bar designed to fit snugly in the middle of a clinched fist. This was a comfortable fit that gave the wearer the ability to open the hand while the tekko remained reasonably snug against the thick area of the palm, thus making it possible to utilize both open-hand and closed-

fist self-defense techniques with it. The traditional tekko kata reflect this open-hand and closed-fist methodology in the fact that two tekko are used simultaneously.

By the early 1930s, the tekko was produced in mass quantities and sold commercially. They became popular in Japan a short time afterward. Perhaps what made the tekko such a desirable personal self-defense weapon was the fact that it was small, compact, and quite easy to conceal even in a business suit or other everyday attire. It provided extra protection in the crowded metropolitan areas where crime was becoming more prevalent.

KOBUDO EIKU

The *eiku* (boat oar) is often referred to as a *kai*. This is simply two common names for a single item, much as in English when we interchange the word oar for paddle.

The standard kobudo eiku is between four and four and one-half feet long, the rounded handle section is about 40 inches long, and the paddle section is about two feet long and flattened into a blade about three and one-half inches wide. The outer edges of the bladed portion of the paddle are sharpened to taper from the center of the shaft. The extreme paddle end is pointed and tapered at a 45 degree angle. The rounded handle section is about one and one-quarter inches in diameter, and the paddle blade has a thickness of about five-eighths of an inch at the center of the flattened end.

These kobudo weapons were usually made of Japanese red oak. However, a variety of dense hardwoods have been used throughout history. To preserve the wood, vegetable oils and/or animal fats were applied to the extremely dense grains. This prevented cracking and warping from the tropical heat and harsh ocean salt water surrounding the Ryukyu Island archipelago.

The utilitarian purpose of the eiku is self-explanatory. Its use as a weapon were many and varied when wielded by an oarsman skilled in the kobudo arts. In those early times, quite a few seamen were versed in the then secretive tode

and kobudo arts. The eiku was an extension of the combat applications that could be adapted to such a seemingly simple, everyday implement as a boat paddle.

The eiku had some unique martial features. The bladed sections on both sides could be used for chopping and hacking. The flattened surface of the blade was extremely suitable for blocking, while the tapered end could be used for poking, stabbing, thrusting, and jabbing with great impact. Slicing, slashing, swinging, and blocks followed by counterattacks were all possible with this weapon.

The opposite end was configured much like the jo and sanshakubo and could be used in almost an identical fashion in self-defense situations. On the beaches and around the coastal areas where the boat oar was usually found, an eiku kobudo expert could use his weapon-tool to flip sand into an unwary

adversary's face, then close in to finish the job while the opponent tried to recover from such a dastardly assault.

Miyamoto Musashi, the legendary Japanese swordsman, who in his lifetime defeated at least sixty opponents in sword battles, actually used a modified version of the typical boat oar to defeat a long-time rival who had hounded him for years. Musashi had long before put away his sword and retired into the mountains to become an artisan and writer. This antagonist kept boasting of his abilities and challenging Musashi to a match to the death. Musashi finally accommodated him and carved a sword from a boat oar for this historic duel. When the battle commenced, the old master soundly defeated the challenger in a matter of seconds using nothing more than this makeshift sword.

KOBUDO TINBE

The word *tinbe* describes a primitive spear and shield weapon that ingeniously combines the use of two typical Ryukyuan farm implements into an effective and unusual self-defense tool. It is believed that the tinbe kobudo art predates the Satsuma invasion of Okinawa in 1609.

The spear portion of the timbe originated from the *hera*, a dagger-like farming implement that resembled a spear but with an extra-ordinarily short shaft. Originally it was used for making holes in the ground so that rice shoots could be planted.

Early versions of the hera were rounded sections of hardwood about a foot in length with one end sharpened to a bluntly tapered point. As metal was introduced to Okinawa, the wooden shanks were gradually replaced with metal blades roughly six inches long and three inches wide. This made the total length of the hera about 18 inches overall. With the metal versions it was possible to plant sugarcane joint roots in the hard soil, and with the addition of the metal tip, it became an all-around farming implement that could also be used for cutting, scraping, and digging in addition to serving as a planting tool.

The shield part of the tinbe came from the

to-hai, a circular container used to hold rice as it was harvested in the fields. To-hai were carved from wood, resembled bowls, and varied between one and two feet in diameter. They were usually very shallow, with depths ranging from four to eight inches and had one or two rope, leather, or sisal hemp straps connected to the outer rim of the vessel. These served as handles for carrying the harvested rice out of the fields.

After the occupation of Okinawa by the Satsuma regime, the hera and to-hai underwent subtle changes in shape and design. The to-hai was modified into a flatter version, and bamboo reinforcement was incorporated into the design. Another version was developed in which the wooden bowl was substituted with dried carapace of the tortoise shell. Because of the strong structural design of the tortoise shell, this version soon became a shield for the tinbe weapon system and was highly prized by early

Okinawan farmers and kobudo devotees.

As the spear and shield kobudo art evolved, so did the elaborateness of the hera. This included a more pronounced point, sharper edges along the tip, and even a balanced weight distribution between the wooden shaft and metal tip. The tip began to look more like a spear of the Japanese vintage, and in some cases the Japanese yari blade replaced the older iron versions.

As a weapon system, the tinbe became one of the first Okinawan kobudo arts to drastically depart from the typical weapon-tool strategies where the empty-hand te and tode precepts of self-defense were prevalent. The tinbe was used in much the same way that the Roman or other European armies would fight with their versions of the sword and shield, except the Ryukyuans used the spear as opposed to the short-bladed sword. Thus far, there has never been any historically documented evidence that the Okinawans borrowed this method of kobudo fighting from European countries.

In any case, the tinbe art became highly specialized. The shield was used exclusively for blocking, deflecting, and protecting the lead (or front) side of the user's body, and the spear was used primarily for instantaneous counter-attacks, including cutting, slashing, stabbing, ripping, thrusting, and in rare instances throwing at the adversary. This new form of kobudo was clearly a two-handed art in every sense of the word.

Today there are only a few kobudo masters who teach this ancient spear and shield art, sharing it only with their most devoted advanced students. The art of kobudo tinbe may seem primitive, but it is still one of the most devastating weapon systems in the Okinawan kobudo arsenal.

KOBUDO SURUCHIN

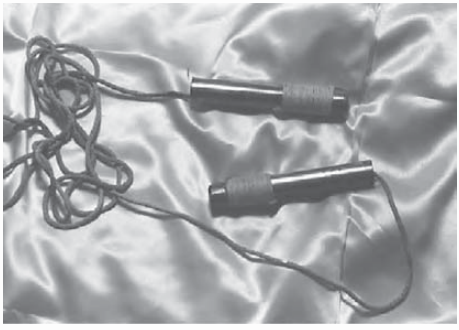
The suruchin is basically a section of rope, cord, or small-link chain between six and ten feet long with a piece of metal or other weighted object connected to each end. These weighted objects were usually cylindrical bolt-like sections of iron or a soft metal such as lead if metal was not readily available. Okinawan kobudo devotees and even farmers with some weapon or te experience used small, heavy rocks with holes drilled through them.

As an improvised self-defense implement, the suruchin was considered by the Okinawans to be surprisingly effective when used properly by someone skilled in the ways of articulated weapon-tool combat. The range of the suruchin varied with the length of the connecting cord and the extended length of the user's arm. Naturally, fighting techniques consisted of spinning and twirling.

The origins of the suruchin are unknown, but weapons of this nature have been used for hunting game since the earliest of times. Many primitive tribes throughout the world use the bola, or bolo, as a hunting weapon. It consists of two, three, or four connected cords of equal length with a weight attached to the end of each. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Okinawan version evolved along the same primitive paths.

In addition to the Okinawans, the Chinese, Japanese, and many Malaysian and Indonesian cultures have similar types of weapons in their martial arts arsenals. Perhaps the suruchin was imported to Okinawa from one of those cultures when ships sailed to the Ryuku Islands to off-load or trade goods.

In any case, the suruchin has a permanent place in Okinawan kobudo. It was discovered to be a useful weapon at night, as it was virtually impossible to see the thin cord



spinning in the dark. The range of the weapon could be altered invisibly by feeding out or pulling in the cord when it was twirling. In addition, the suruchin could be used as a whip, a lasso, and in a number of other clever ways to restrain, subdue, or tie up an opponent and/or his weapon. Naturally, this took a skillful kobudo expert.

It was not uncommon in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for Okinawan farmers to use the suruchin as a belt of sorts. Wrapped around the waist several times, the suruchin was a cleverly disguised weapon that was readily in reach should the need arise.

KOBUDO CHINTE

The *chinte* is another improvised weapon that was virtually unheard of outside of Okinawa until recently. Its basic design consists of a section of bamboo or oak measuring between 18 and 24 inches in length and about two and one-half to three inches in diameter. These are drilled entirely through at points three or four inches from each end, and hemp rope or thin leather straps are inserted through these holes, which could be tied to the user's wrist and elbows so that the entire forearm is protected from tode or te empty-hand strikes or even weapon attacks. These reinforced forearm guards could provide the first defensive barrier needed to get within the attacker's defense; once inside, he could use the ends to attack the opponent's vulnerable targets.

What gave chinte another lethal dimension was the fact that they could be used in conjunction with fist-load or staff weapons. The chinte had a way of neutralizing the odds against longer or more superior weapons

ABOUT OKINAWAN KOBUDO KATA

Kobudo kata can best be described as a systematic, organized series of defensive and offensive weapon fighting techniques performed in a sequence against one or more imaginary opponents. Within these sets of stylized movements are included the realistic techniques of intercepting, deflecting, altering, evading, striking, slashing, thrusting, poking, jabbing, restraining, ripping, disabling, and disengaging the opponent and/or his weapon.

Upon careful analysis of most Okinawan kobudo kata, one discovers that defensive moves are generally followed by offensive counterattacks to form a single self-defense technique. The form may have many of these combinations in a patterned sequence.

The techniques in the majority of Okinawan kobudo kata are usually divided into fundamental and intermediate categories, with an occasional form utilizing more advanced technical techniques. The basic weapon maneuvers are comprised of the fundamental defensive and offensive techniques and are

considered the prerequisites for a given kata. The movements from the intermediate series serve to connect the basic movements to each other. They also provide the kobudo practitioner with the necessary skills to begin training in the more advanced techniques.

The traditional Okinawan kobudo kata are taught in a particular order based on the complexity of the kata and the lethality of the weapons involved. Thus, the bo is usually taught first, then the nunchaku, then the sai, tonfa, kama, and so on.

More often than not, fundamental movements are also found in the intermediate and advanced kata of a specific weapon. This helps

to strengthen the practitioner's understanding of the basic principles of kobudo. It also puts emphasis on the techniques that have the most realistic application for actual combat. Superfluous or fancy techniques are usually omitted because they have no real value in actual combat.

Although there is no provable account of how, when, and why kobudo kata—or any kata, for that matter—came into existence, there are several plausible theories that explain their evolution. Knowing the more commonly accepted theories will perhaps enlighten you as to why kata are so important for both the weapon and empty-hand martial arts.

Before written records were made, man conveyed his thoughts, ideas, and expressions in the form of verbal gestures and/or physical emulations. This not only served to preserve and pass on earlier collective knowledge, it provided the basis for more sophisticated discoveries to be added to this information. Thus, newer and more refined knowledge was developed and expounded upon while preserving the sources from which it emanated.

Whether from father to son, mother to daughter, or teacher to student, this transmission of culture has endured since the beginning of mankind and is a profound basis for what we know today. Undoubtedly, it was a similar process that provided the foundation for many of the kobudo kata.

There have been times throughout history when certain forms of knowledge were deemed dangerous because of the threat they posed to those in power. This was certainly true of martial arts. For that reason, knowledge about the combative sciences and how to defeat an armed adversary had to be kept secret among oppressed but determined people. Fighting skills were often camouflaged in cultural dances or even misrepresented in the form of theatrical and ritualized ceremonies.

When the Okinawan people were subjugated by the Satsuma clan of Japan, many of these situations undoubtedly arose. The Satsuma reinstituted edicts banning the possession of weapons by all Okinawans, but since weapons had been banned on other occasions, there probably already existed a tradition of secret training with weapon-tools. Written documentation, even if it existed, would not had been sufficient to chronicle the sophisticated methodology that had to be conveyed for the Okinawan empty-hand and kobudo fighting arts to be preserved and passed on. Only the formalization of kata would be able to fulfill this need in a concise fashion.

An interesting and important element in the development of kobudo kata is its relationship to the Okinawan cultural dances known as *odori*. Some scholars think that the Okinawans borrowed from the Chinese the idea of expressing kobudo in the form of traditional dance, as many early odori dances reflect considerable cultural influence from China. They portrayed movements from the island's agricultural life and harvesting rituals, which incorporated the use of simple farm tools and fishing implements. Such dances undoubtedly prompted some of the visionary kobudo innovators to create kata portraying their weapon-tool fighting techniques.

The first historical account of formalized kobudo practice comes from Yaeyama, an island group located to the south of Okinawa. The tribal chieftain of Yaeyama, Oyekei Akahachi, is credited with formulating fighting techniques utilizing the bo and eiku, having devised several graceful patterns of movement that resembled ritualized dance. One of these rare kata sets is Akahachi No Bo (staff of Akahachi) and the other is Akahachi No Eiku (boat oar of Akahachi), named in honor of the once mighty chieftain who created them. They depict realistic fighting methods that Akahachi used in warfare against intruders who tried to gain control of his small island domain.

It should be kept in mind that the early kobudo masters spent years developing and refining kata for specific weapons and weapon-tools. Unfortunately, because many of these men never found suitable successors, some of the older knowledge simply died with them, never to be known or practiced by future generations of kobudo practitioners.

It should be noted that almost every style of weapon art found throughout the Far East has some form of kata or stylized pattern of training that exemplifies its fighting strategies and techniques. Finding a qualified instructor knowledgeable in a specific weapon art should be your first priority when embarking on a journey into the way of that kobudo weapon.

TRADITIONAL OKINAWAN KOBUDO WEAPON KATA CATALOG

Over the span of 400 years, many traditional Okinawan kobudo kata were created. The following kata catalog is an attempt to document and chronicle as many of these weapon forms as possible. Through more than 35 years of exhaustive research, almost 100 kata have been discovered. Undoubtedly there are many more that remain shrouded in secrecy or have been lost forever.

Because of the clandestine manner in which many styles of the fighting arts were fostered, teachers usually passed on their knowledge only to trusted devotees or immediate family members who had proven themselves worthy enough to have access to this highly guarded information. In order to be taught the old kata, one had to be willing to prove his sincerity and train for years, sometimes for decades, before the more advanced secrets were revealed. This is alien to the western practice of committing everything of an historical or scientific nature to paper for posterity and reference for future generations.

The era from which these unique kobudo weapon kata were created or developed have been included for your general information.

Old Ryuku Kingdom Era

The Old Ryukyu Kingdom commonly refers to the time prior to 1868 A.D. The kobudo kata that fall in this period have a substantial Chinese or, in some cases, Japanese bushido influence.

Meiji Restoration Era

The Meiji Restoration Era is the period between 1868 and 1911. The kobudo kata from this era are considered to have a greater amount of true Okinawan influence reflected in the techniques.

Taisho Era

The Taisho Era refers to the time between 1912 and 1925. Many of the kobudo kata created during this period reflect the weapon fighting and self-defense techniques that evolved in many of the newly established styles indigenous to Okinawa. Some were dedicated and so named after past kobudo or karate masters who were heralded for their great fighting skills. Others were named for contemporary masters who developed these arts using variations of older kobudo weapons. Still others were new weapons systems that utilized the very best techniques of the kobudo masters who created them.

Showa Era

The Showa Era started in 1925. Virtually all Showa Era kobudo kata were created or developed by the kobudo masters of specific styles noted for their contributions to Okinawan martial arts.

Bojutsu Kobudo Kata

Kata Name	*Era*
AKAHACHI NO GYAKU BO	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
CHOUN NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SHIUSHI NO KON SHO	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SHIUSHI NO KON DAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SUEISHI NO KUN SHO	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SUEISHI NO KUN DAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
(CHINEN) SHIKIYANAKA NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SAKUGAWA NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SAKUGAWA NO KON (SHO)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SAKUGAWA NO KON (DAI)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SAKUGAWA NO BO KIHON	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SAKUGAWA NO BO (KUMIBO SHO)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SAKUGAWA NO BO (KUMINO DAI)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
GINOWAN NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
MATSUMURA NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
URASOE NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
TANTA (GUA) NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
CHATAN (YARA) NO KUN	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
MIYAZATO NO KUN	MEIJI RESTORATION
SUEYOSHI NO KUN	MEIJI RESTORATION
TOYAMA NO KUN	MEIJI RESTORATION
YAMACHI NO BO	MEIJI RESTORATION
CHIKIN NO BO	MEIJI RESTORATION
SHIRO (TARU) NO KUN	MEIJI RESTORATION
SHIRO NO KON	MEIJI RESTORATION
YONEGAWA NO KUN	MEIJI RESTORATION
SESOKO NO KUN	MEIJI RESTORATION
TOKUMINE NO KUN	MEIJI RESTORATION
TOKUMINE NO KUN (SHO)	MEIJI RESTORATION
TOKUMINE NO KUN (DAI)	MEIJI RESTORATION
OGUSUKU NO BO	TAISHO ERA
CHIBANA NO BO	TAISHO ERA
ARAGAKI NO BO	TAISHO ERA
TSUKEN (HANTAGAWA) NO KUN	TAISHO ERA
SOKEN NO KUN	TAISHO ERA
KONGA NO KUN	TAISHO ERA
TOYAMA NO KUN	TAISHO ERA
SHUSHI NO KON	SHOWA ERA
NAKAZATO NO BO (#1)	SHOWA ERA
NAKAZATO NO BO (#2)	SHOWA ERA
NAKAZATO NO BO (#3)	SHOWA ERA
SHAKA-KEN NO BO (DOSHIN-KAN)	SHOWA ERA

Saijutsu Kobudo Kata

KOURUGUWA SAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
CHATAN YARA SAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
HAMAHIGA NO SAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
TANTA (GUA) NO SAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
TAWADA NO SAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
TSUKEN SHITAHAKU NO SAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
USHI SAI (SHODAN)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SAKUGAWA SAI	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
HAKUTAGAWA NO SAI	MEIJI RESTORATION
YAKAA NO SAI	MEIJI RESTORATION
KOJOKAGI NO SAI	MEIJI RESTORATION
KUNIYOSHI NO SAI	MEIJI RESTORATION
JIGEN NO SAI	TAISHO ERA
ARAGAKI NO SAI	TAISHO ERA
MATAYOSHI NO SAI	TAISHO ERA
SOKEN NO SAI	TAISHO ERA
NAKAZATO NO SAI (SHODAN)	SHOWA ERA
NAKAZATO NO SAI (NIDAN)	SHOWA ERA
NAKAZATO NO SAI (SANDAN)	SHOWA ERA

Tonfajutsu Kobudo Kata

HAMAHIGA NO TONFA (TUIFA)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
USHI NO TONFA	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
YARA (GUA) NO TONFA	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SEISHI (KI) NO TONFA (TUIFA)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SOKEN NO TONFA	TAISHO ERA
KION NO TONFA (DOSHINKAN)	SHOWA ERA

Kamajutsu Kubudo Kata

SAGAMI (KI) NO KAMA	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
TOZAN NICHO KAMA	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
KANEGAWA NICHO KAMA (SHO)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
KANEGAWA NICHO KAMA (DAI)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
TOYAMA NICHO KAMA	MEIJI RESTORATION
MATAYOSHI KAMA	TAISHO ERA
NAKAZATO NO KAMA (# 1)	SHOWA ERA
NAKAZATO NO KAMA (# 2)	SHOWA ERA

Eikujutsu (Kai) Kobudo Kata

MATSUMURA NO EIKU	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
AKAHACHI NO EIKU	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
TSUKEN SUNAKAKE NO EIKU	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SUNAKAKE NO EIKU	TAISHO ERA
NAKAZATO NO KAI	SHOWA ERA

Tebejutsu (Hera/Tohei) Kobudo Kata

KANEGAWA NO TEMBE (HERA & TOHEI)	MEIJI ERA

Tekkojutsu Kobudo Kata

TEKKO NO KATA	TAISHO ERA
MAEZATO NO TEKKO	TAISHO ERA
MANJI NO SAI (FIST LOAD FORM)	SHOWA ERA

Nuntebojutsu Kobudo Kata

MATAYOSHI NO NUNTE-BO (#1)	TAISHO ERA
MATAYOSHI NO NUNTE-BO (#2)	TAISHO ERA
MATAYOSHI NO NUNTE-BO (#3)	TAISHO ERA

Nunchakujutsu Kobudo Kata

SAGAMI (KI) NO NUNCHAKU	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
SEISHI (KI) NO NUNCHAKU (DOUBLE)	OLD RYUKYU KINGDOM
MATAYOSHI NO NUNCHAKU (#1)	TAISHO ERA
MATAYOSHI NO NUNCHAKU (#2)	TAISHO ERA
MATAYOSHI NO NUNCHAKU (#3)	TAISHO ERA
NAKAZATO NUNCHAKU (#1)	SHOWA ERA
NAKAZATO NUNCHAKU (#2)	SHOWA ERA
TAIRA NO NUNCHAKU	SHOWA ERA

About Eclectic Kobudo Kata

Besides the kobudo kata classified in the traditional kata catalog, there are literally hundreds of eclectic (nonhistoric) weapon forms. Some are variations or adaptations that extrapolate on the techniques and/or strategies found in the respected weapons applications.

Modern renderings of these ancient kata are common among even traditional Okinawan kobudo and karate dojos. Some have been created so that the various weapons can be used against each other for training purposes. Most of them have strong ties to the traditional ones classified above.

BOOK III

THE WEAPONS OF JAPAN

THE TALE OF JAPANESE BUGEI

The tale of Japanese weaponry has to begin with a brief account of the country's military history, traditions, and leaders—the shoguns, warlords, and regents. After all, the soul and spirit of Japan can be found in the way of the samurai warrior, and their weapon arts are what made the samurai feared and respected throughout the land.

The three most highly prized national treasures in all of Japanese history are the sacred mirror, the comma-shaped beads, and the famed samurai sword. The fact that the samurai sword is on this list attests to the significance that the people of the land of the rising sun place on it as being more than a mere weapon. It was responsible for the creation of a special caste of nobility. It epitomized the way of the warrior spirit. And it symbolized a culture that is felt in Japan even today, long after the samurai caste was abolished in 1886. In order to understand the significance of the way of the warrior in Japan's history, it is necessary to appreciate the significant historical and cultural factors that contributed to its evolution.

Early History

During the Archaic Age around 7000 B.C., virtually all of the inhabitants of Japan were nomadic and based their survival and culture on hunting and pottery making. By the fourth century A.D., clans (*uji*) had established an agricultural society, with rice as their primary staple. Earthenware vessels were common, but bronze utensils and crude weapons had emerged as well.

It is documented that in 57 A.D. the first Japanese envoy from the Nu Islands traveled to Han China and returned with cultural advancements. Soon thereafter, the Yamoto tribes attacked western Japan. This invasion set in motion the forces that would that would unite the isolated regions into a nation-state. With the military victories of Tokeru No Mikoto, the various Japanese regions were finally ruled under a kingdom. It was under this imperial system that iron weapons came to prominence in Japan, mostly in the form of crude swords and spears.

The Yamoto Period

In this same period, Jimmu, the first emperor of Japan, embarked on a unification mission from Kyushu through the Inland Sea to Kashiwara in the Yamoto Province, culminating in the defeat and subjugation of all hostile tribes in those outermost regions. This annexation unified all of the northern regions under what was known as the Yamoto Empire. In about 360, a greater expansion was attempted when Empress Jingo's forces invaded Korea.

During the Yamoto Period (300 to 710), many military and cultural advances took place in

Japan. Chinese and Korean swordsmiths traveled to the Yamoto Empire, bringing with them their weapon-making talents. Stylized writing from Korea was also introduced, as was Buddhism in 552 under the sponsorship of the Soga clan. This was staunchly opposed by the Mononobe and Nakatomi clans, but after a bitter defeat of the Mononobe by the powerful Soga, Buddhism was proclaimed as the state religion of the empire.

Although cultural influences from the Asian continent had already made their way to Japan, the introduction of Buddhism enabled continental culture to flourish there. The results in terms of architecture, sculpture, painting, and poetry were so spectacular that the Yamoto Period was known as the golden age of Buddhist art.

In that same era, the bulk of foreign imports and a considerable amount of cultural influence came from China under the T'ang Dynasty. In 604 the Chinese calendar was adopted, and in 607 the Yamoto Empire sent its first ambassadors to China.

Shortly thereafter, the Soga clan was defeated by Naka No Oe and Nakatomi Kamatari clans, and the Taiho reforms were enacted. By 663, the Korean Silla kingdom, assisted by the T'ang Dynasty of China, defeated the kingdom of Paekche and in the process routed the Japanese forces on the Korean peninsula. With the emergence of the Nara Period (named for the first permanent capital at Nara), Japan set up a bureaucracy closely resembling the one in China.

The Nara Period and the Taika Reform

In bringing the Yamoto Period to a close, the Temmo regime usurped the emperor's throne and the Taika Reform was enacted in 645. The Taika Reform reestablished the imperial family as the absolute rulers of Japan. This positioned Empress Koken (Shotoku) as exalted ruler of the Empire, and the regents enacted new national laws that were intended to unify all of the rival factions. This occurred after the defeat of the imposing Fujiwara Hirotsugu clan in 764.

Until that time, the art of sword making and armament construction had been poor. Japanese weapons lacked the quality to endure the rigors of combat without literally being destroyed on the battlefield. But with national unification, the regents saw a need for better armament and stronger swords to equip its army. Abbot Dokyo, the prime minister, implemented devoted efforts to strengthen the arsenal of the Nara regime.

The Heian Period

The Fujiwara Hirotsugu clan, meanwhile, managed to marry their daughters into the royal family through political wrangling, and soon thereafter the shrewd Fujiwara aristocracy obtained control of the central government in Nara. This period became known as the Heian Period (794 to 1191).

In 794, the capital of Japan was moved from Nara to Heian (present-day Kyoto) in the Yamashiro Province. This period was to become known as the Age of the Court Nobles, with good reason. The actual administrative functions and day-to-day affairs of government were left in the hands of minor officials so that their superiors could devote themselves to an aesthetic enjoyment of nature and art within their exclusive society. The biggest benefit of this was the development of a uniquely Japanese culture of unsurpassed refinement. The warrior arts and the manufacture of quality samurai swords reached an equally high level of refinement. In fact, samurai sword making reached its zenith during the latter half of the Heian era.

During a period of eight reigns totaling over 100 years, the Fujiwara clan ruled as regents and military/civil dictators. There was relative peace at this time, but in 801 Tamuramoro Sakanoue moved into Japan's northern regions and defeated the Ainu tribes that had rebelled against the government.

By 900, the costly regulations of the Fujiwara regents were placing an increased burden on the peasantry and caused them to revolt in large numbers. There was a lengthy period where peasant uprisings and skirmishes plagued the administration.

The samurai clans of Minamoto and Taira

took advantage of this situation. During the Late Heian Period (898 to 1185), rival samurai clans vied for power and eventually overthrew the Fujiwaras. The years 939 to 940 saw the revolt and execution of Taira Masakado. Immediately following was the Early Nine Years War (1051 to 1062), during which the Minamoto clan defeated the Abe clan in the northern regions of Honshu. The Late Three Years War (1083 to 1087) ensued 21 years later. Minamoto Yoshiie's forces defeated the Kiyowara clan in the same region where his relative defeated the Abe clan.

Survival of the fittest was evident during the Age of Feudal Barons and Military Nobles (1156 to 1868). The daimyo who possessed the most wealth were able to recruit the services of skilled warriors to protect and defend their interests, while less wealthy regional nobles fell by the wayside. In many instances, the daimyo with smaller samurai forces sided with stronger clans in hopes of elevating their own status.

The Taira Period

During the Hogen War, which marked the beginning of the short-lived Rokukara Period (1156 to 1185), the Taira clan again became active in the military-political affairs of Japan. After Taira Kiyomori defeated Minamoto in the war and was victorious in the Heiji War (1159 to 1160), his clan took power throughout Japan. The subsequent Taira Period lasted for 20 years until the Gempei War (1180 to 1185) resulted in the now strengthened Minamoto regime completely destroying the Taira.

The Kamakura Period and the Rise of the Shogun

The Kamakura Period began in 1192 and lasted until 1336. Japan found itself under the rule of a new warrior class, a period of 675 years of feudalism under *shogunate* military supreme command with both administrative and judicial power. Japan's emperor simply became a figurehead, and the *shogun* was the ultimate ruler of the nation.

In setting up this new shogunate (feudal government), the Minamoto regime moved the capital to Kamakura in Sagami (Soshu) Province (present-day Kanagawa). From there, Minamoto Yoritomo succeeded in ousting the aristocrats in power as the country entered its age of medieval feudalism. It was obvious, however, that this new class could not overturn the entire state structure with one blow. Several centuries of compromise with the aristocracy were necessary before the feudal system became firmly established.

In 1205, the Hojo clan ascended to power and kept alive the samurai traditions that had been implemented by Minamoto. Virtually every aspect of society was touched by the ethical and cultural influences established by the shogunate. Art, social conducts, and stringent protocols elevated the status of the warrior.

Some of the most durable weapons that had ever been produced were made during this era. The school of swordsmiths that lived in and around the Sagami Province flourished with the overwhelming demand for their services. Even the *ryu* (school) that taught the use of the sword and other military weapons prospered as never before.

In 1274, the Mongols attempted to invade Japan, but the naval invasion force was virtually destroyed by a powerful typhoon. The Japanese felt that their divine emperor had sent a divine wind (*kamikaze*) to protect them from the Mongolians. When a second naval assault by the same enemy seven years later (1281) met the same fate in another unforeseen typhoon, the Japanese knew that they were invincible. The divine wind sent by their emperor for the second time was a sign that the gods sided with the warriors of the Kamakura shogunate.

This spiritual protection had a unifying effect on the people of Japan, and the shogunate strengthened its grip on the reigns of power. Once the Hojo administration felt that it had absolute control of Japan, luxury and excessiveness crept into the samurai warrior's way of life. Over the next 50 years, the Hojo Regency and the enormous power it wielded slipped into decline. Protocol was lax, military readiness was virtually nonexistent, and the greatness of the Hojo administration was tarnished so badly that rivals began plotting to overthrow the shogun.

The Ashikaga and Muromachi Periods

With the aid of the Ashikaga clan, Emperor Godaigo succeeded in overthrowing the Hojo Regency in the Genko War (1331 to 1336). This conflict paved the way for the Ashikaga Period (1336 to 1568)—one year after Ashikaga Takauji took power, his clan betrayed Emperor Godaigo and set up its own puppet government at Kyoto. Emperor Godaigo was forced to flee for his life to the Hill of Yoshino, near Nara. Ashikaga re-established the shogun system and proclaimed himself supreme shogun of the region.

This, in essence, started the Muromachi Period (1337 to 1573) and established what was to be two rival imperial courts in Japan, the Southern and Northern Courts. For 55 years (1337 to 1392), the Ashikaga shogunate tried to exercise control over as much of Japan as possible. But as it spread its forces too thin in order to quell remote uprisings, the Ashikagas lost control of their ability to control the provinces. Finally, in 1392 the Northern and Southern Courts were unified after many minor and several major battles. This warring period—which included perhaps the largest and most bitter feudal-age conflict in the seven-year war between clans led by Prince Kanenaga and Imagawa Sadayo on the island of Kyushu (1365 to 1372)—had become known as the Nambokucho Period and resulted in the published records of the Jinno Shotoki, or Records of Legitimate Succession of Divine Rulers.

The Sengoku Period

In 1467 the Onin Wars ensued and lasted for 10 years. This started a sequence of regional and provincial conflicts that was to last more than 100 years (between 1447 and 1574) known as the Sengoku Period. It was during this era that the production of more elaborate and superior swords evolved. In fact, more swords, spears, bows, armor, and other armament were produced in this period than in any other in Japan's history.

Just 31 years before the Sengoku Period came to an end, firearms were introduced to Japan by the Portuguese in 1543. This changed the dynamics of warfare throughout the region and gave warlords a new weapon in their arsenals.

As the warring intensified and regional chieftains became stronger due to alliances, the power of the larger samurai forces in the remote areas was felt as far as the capital in Kyoto. The emperor was in dire need of a trusted subject who could restore order in the empire.

The Azuchi-Momoyama Period

At his request, Oda Nobunaga, a samurai of lower status, was beckoned to Kyoto and formally appointed vice-shogun under the emperor. His task was to use military force, diplomacy, and any other strategy to restore order to the war-torn country. This essentially started the Azuchi-Momoyama Period (1574 to 1602). Oda Nobunaga set up headquarters in Kyoto and began to eliminate opposing clans that undermined the desires of the Emperor. He ordered the destruction of Buddhist monasteries and temples whose teachings defied the edicts of the emperor. This eight year mission was temporarily interrupted when Oda Nobunaga was assassinated (some accounts claim he committed suicide before he could be captured by rival samurai forces), but in 1582, the same year of Oda's death, one of his able lieutenants, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, resumed the task at hand. For 10 years he conducted military campaigns until the empire was unified, and this leader of humble birth was appointed regent of the empire.

In the same year that he unified Japan (1592), Hideyoshi launched the first of two unsuccessful invasions of Korea and China (in 1592 and 1597). After his death in 1598, the authority of the Toyotomi clan shifted to the powerful daimyo Tokugawa Ieyasu.

The Tokugawa Period

At the Battle of Sekigahara in September of 1600, Tokugawa's forces defeated the Satsuma clan and many of its allies. This period is often referred to as the Tokugawa Period, named for the great daimyo who inaugurated it. His and his successors' regime lasted for 267 years.

Tokugawa set up his capital in Edo, which is present-day Tokyo, in 1603. In 1615, he ordered the destruction of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's castle and established fundamental laws for the shoguns, nobles, and samurai caste, giving each their own code of conduct and responsibility. This was known as Tokugawa's Buke-Shohatto (Laws of Military Houses). Nine years later he expelled the Spanish and adopted a closed-door policy toward foreign countries.

Although it was a relatively peaceful era, the Tokugawa reign was not without its share of battles. The Shimabara rebellion (1637-1638) was followed by the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639. The following year, all foreigners were expelled except for a small Dutch trading company. Later, in 1657 and 1670 respectively, two important chronicles were published that affected the overall unity of Japan. These were the Dainihon-shi (National Chronicles) and the Honsho Tsugan (History of Our State).

Between 1732 and 1786, famines and a new level of unrest emerged in Japan. It took the Tokugawa Shogunate reforms signed into law in 1787 to quell most of this upheaval. Meanwhile, the Western nations tried to coerce the Tokugawa administration to open its borders to the rest of the world. This was resisted and caused more internal unrest in Japan. In 1791, American and Russian warships appeared in Japanese waters as a show of force. In 1867 Tokugawa Yoshinobu resigned and the road was paved for open commerce with the rest of the world.

The Meiji Restoration

In the following year, the Modern Period, commonly known as the Meiji Restoration, was ushered into Japan. The emperor was again restored to a position of power and the samurai ruling class was dissolved. Emperor Meiji, the one-hundred and twenty-second descendant of Emperor Jimmu, aided by the Sotozama daimyos, regained sovereignty from the Tokugawa clan and moved the capital to Tokyo in 1868.

Eight years later, the samurai caste was completely abolished, and the wearing of the samurai sword, espousing samurai warrior ethics, and wearing the distinguished samurai top knot were made illegal by national decree.

The way of the samurai (*bushido*) and the powerful feudal-age daimyos had, in essence, created a system of samurai rule that prospered for almost a thousand years. In fact, almost the entire ruling history of Japan prior to the Meiji Restoration had been based on military superiority. After reading about the turbulent feudal-age history of Japan, it is easy to understand why the samurai warrior and their awesome weapon arsenal evolved out of necessity.

MARTIAL ARTS CATEGORIES OF FEUDAL JAPAN

The following lists present the Japanese martial arts (especially the weapon ryu) and the classifications of the various styles of weapon warfare. These arts evolved over hundreds of years and are still practiced in Japan today, mostly to preserve them as a national treasure that will never be forgotten.

Essentially, there were nine categories of martial arts used by the warriors of feudal Japan. It should be kept in mind that a samurai usually began his martial arts training at the age of five. By the time he was in his mid teens, he was fairly well versed in several unarmed methods and had extensive experience with various types of weaponry. A samurai warrior may have spent his entire life achieving proficiency is these nine categories of budo arts.

UNARMED
- aikido
- aikijutsu
- chikarakurabe
- chogusoku
- empty-hand combat
- genkotsu
- hakushi
- judo
- jujutsu
- kempo (empty-hand)
- kiaijutsu

kogusoku
koshi no mawari
koshi no wakari
kumiuchi and roikumiuchi
shikaku
shinobi
shubaku
sumai
sumo
taido and taidojutsu
torite
wajutsu
yawara

VARIOUS INSTRUMENTS
chigirigijutsu
gekikanjutsu
juttejutsu (jitte)
kusarigamajutsu
kusarijutsu
suibajutsu

FENCING
iaido
kendo
kenjutsu
tantojutsu
tojutsu

STAFF
jodo
jojutsu (bo)
sodegaramijutsu
sojutsu
tetsubojutsu iaijutsu

SPEARMANSHIP
asumatajutsu
naginatajutsu

ARCHERY
kyudo
kyujutsu
shagei

EQUESTRIAN ARTS
bajutsu
tessenjutsu (war fan) jobajutsu

SWIMMING
katchu gozen oyogi
oyogijutsu
suieijutsu

OCCULT ARTS
chikairi no jutsu
fukihari
koppo
ninjutsu
shinobijutsu
shurikenjutsu
suijohokojutsu
toiri no jutsu
yubijutsu yarijutsu

UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DO AND JUTSU

In Japanese, the word *jutsu* usually followed the name, or martial methodology, for which it was intended. Jutsu (sometimes spelled *jitsu*) loosely translates to mean art. More specifically, it connotes a military form of fighting used in bugei (arts of war) as opposed to those martial activities intended merely for sport or aesthetic value. When it is attached to the end of a martial style deriving its origin from Japan, jutsu describes warrior art methodologies that are intended for the battlefield.

The word *do* literally translates to mean way or, more specifically, way of enlightenment, self-realization, and deeper understanding. It was coined and used primarily in this respect after the Warring Periods had subsided and the Tokugawa era was drawing to a close. The word implied that a martial art had been transformed from a practical means of combat to an educational training form, with emphasis on perfection of the human character.

Although do and jutsu, when affixed to the end of a martial art, are sometimes used interchangeably, you should realize these distinctions. Again, jutsu was the old term that stressed harsh, sometimes brutal, techniques that were intended purely for defeating an adversary in the most efficient manner. Do denotes a more artful method of using the old

weapon or empty-hand ways to practice, study, and teach the ancient martial arts in a peaceful manner.

The arts presented hereafter will deal almost exclusively with weapon warfare as it applies to the jutsu precepts. The older, more realistic approaches to training, applications, and purposes will be revealed.

ABOUT KENJUTSU

Kenjutsu literally translates to mean sword art [ken = sword] + [jutsu = art]. More specifically, it refers to the Japanese art of samurai swordsmanship.

From about the ninth century onward, there was an enormous growth and evolution of kenjutsu ryu in Japan. By the end of the Tokugawa Era (in 1867), there were about 300 active kenjutsu schools throughout the entire empire, and many of these had branches within their respected form of swordsmanship. In fact, there was almost as many sword-making ryu as there were schools that taught the various styles of kenjutsu.

The traditional kenjutsu ryu specialized in the use of swords of various lengths. These specializations included instruction in the use of the long sword (*daito*), medium sword (*wakizashi*), short sword (*tanto*), and over-the-shoulder sword (*nodachi*).

The primary sword that every samurai warrior learned to use was the daito. This was his main bladed weapon and was usually accompanied by an auxiliary sword (wakizashi).

A few of the ancient ryu used the sword techniques that were systematized in 1350 by Chosai and Jion. These techniques were generally divided into two categories: cutting (*kiri*) and thrusting (*tsuki*) used in attacks and counterattacks, and parries used in defense.

As the kenjutsu schools became more competitive for the attentions of powerful daimyo who might retain their services to teach, styles became more secretive as to the way they were taught. Once a school's kenjutsu sensei had established a reputation for producing exceptionally skilled swordsman, he relied on this reputation to attract the business of warlords, samurai commanders, and fief regents.

As swordsmanship schools evolved, so did the internal styles of kenjutsu. Some styles became known for teaching four cuts. Others devised strategies for multiple counterattacks, attacking exposed anatomical targets when the enemy was wearing armor. Still other schools developed techniques that were purely aggressive in nature, based on the philosophy that you continued cutting the vulnerable areas of the enemy's body until he missed a parry and was slashed to death.

No warrior was proud of wounding an enemy in any manner other than established by strict samurai code. This code essentially stated that the daito was to be directed at only four points: the top of the head, the wrist, the side, and the leg just below the knee, which the torso armor did not always protect.

Most boys of samurai caste usually started training in one of the respected schools of kenjutsu by the age of five. They began with a wooden version of the sword and remained in that mode of training until they reached their fifteenth birthday. Then they were presented with a real *katana* that was razor sharp. After they had become somewhat skillful in one of the kenjutsu styles, it was common for the novice samurai to learn minor specialized blade arts.

Prior to Miyamoto Musashi's introduction of a ryu known as Niten Ichiryu (Two Heavens-as-One School, sometimes referred to as Nito Ichiryu, or the Two Swords-as-One School), virtually every school of sword fencing used

only one sword—the daito, or, the longer sword—on the battlefield. The fact that Musashi went down in history as one of the greatest swordsman in all of Japan said a lot about his innovation.

Musashi's art was extremely difficult because he used extensive gliding and spinning techniques combined with precise footwork. By wielding the long sword in his right hand and the medium sword in his left, he could parry and cut simultaneously. He could also engage two or more enemy at the same time. Even if the opponents wielded spears, he was skillful enough to defeat them.

Today, there are some ryu that have followed in Musashi's footsteps and created their own unique style of wielding two swords simultaneously. Other more traditional schools have remained content to teach their art in the form it was taught for generations. Some of the more popular styles have been modified over the decades so that competitive tournaments could be conducted. Kendo developed from kenjutsu for this purpose.

ABOUT IAIJUTSU

Iaijutsu literally translates to mean sword-drawing art [iai = sword drawing] + [jutsu = art]. It is the precursor to the more modern do that emphasizes the spiritual aspects of perfecting the human character through dedicated training with the sword. There are four stages of sword mechanics that are emphasized in iaijutsu: *nukitsuke* (drawing), *kiritsuke* (cutting), *chiburi* (removal of blood from the blade), and *noto* (returning the blade to the scabbard).

Iaijutsu is commonly known as the art of the quick draw, and for good reason. To some staunch kenjutsu traditionalists, it has the reputation of a deceptive and cunning way of defeating an opponent before the engagement actually begins. In a sense, it has the stigma of "cheating" attached to it.

Briefly explained, iaijutsu as a specialized form of sword usage is predicated on the belief that when two opponents are equally skilled in the use of the daito, the one with the quickest draw will prevail . . . *especially if the draw and the cut are one and the same.*

This opening movement must be perfect. The draw is combined with an instantaneous cut, slash, rip, or strike to the opponent's vulnerable area. This extremely quick one-motion attack could be used without warning against an unwary foe who was ready but had not yet initiated his own attack or even drawn his sword. Many a warrior well-versed in the tactics of iaijutsu took advantage of an unsuspecting, possibly more skilled adversary using this tactical surprise.

Many samurai warriors contended that iaijutsu was a legitimate off-shoot of the root art of kenjutsu. This was predicated on the belief that a warrior must always be prepared to confront danger at any moment regardless of how, when, or why a sword-wielding enemy may choose to do so.

Others with a narrower view of military swordfighting tactics believe that the entire art is based on that exact moment when the sword leaves the scabbard and strikes its intended target. These individuals contend that the most important moment in any weapon duel is that crucial instant of striking or cutting first, which decides who lives and who dies. All other preparatory and ritualized trappings are insignificant compared to that moment. Therein is the essence of true *iaido* (way of sword drawing).

Iaijutsu practitioners, especially in ancient times, had to swear on their lives that they would not divulge the secrets of their ryu. It remained pretty much this way until the formalized practice of iaido came into existence. Today, even iaijutsu is openly practiced and demonstrated throughout the world.

ABOUT YARIJUTSU

Yarijutsu literally translates to mean spear art [yari = spear] + [jutsu = art]. It is one of the fundamental weapon sciences of Asia, second in traditional significance only to the ancient bow and arrow.

The art of using the spear has been refined tremendously as a fighting science both by the Chinese and the Japanese. In fact, almost every ancient civilization has had some form of training in the use of the spear for warfare.

Most martial historians believe that spears used in Japanese samurai warfare actually derived their origin from Chinese versions that were introduced in the early cultural exchange periods. Some historians believe that the feudal-age varieties closely copied the Chinese *hoko* (halberd), where wooden staffs were affixed to bladed implements. Sometimes, even broken sword blades were ingeniously attached to the bo and used in a similar fashion.

The Japanese spear (*yari*) is similar to most other bladed weapons in design and structure. Its high quality of tempering, lightness and strength, and extreme sharpness made the yari an exceptional polearm. It was even designed in a variety of lengths and sizes. Some had curved blades, others were adorned with guards, and others featured spearheads with tapered three-sided blades and blood grooves. The Japanese yari makers went to great extremes to make their bladed weapons among the best in the world.

The yari had a specialized niche in the Japanese military sciences. In virtually every feudal army, the daimyo used spearmen as a part of his foot soldier forces. Archers, cavalry, and spearmen comprised the majority of these armies, and the yari-bearing troops were considered among the most courageous of the three. This is because the spearmen were the first to engage the enemy in close-quarter battle. The spear was longer than the katana and therefore gave the yari soldier a distinct advantage.

Of course, with massive armies numbering in the thousands engaged in close-range ground battles, the yari warrior had to use a high degree of strategy and combat acumen to avoid being cut down by an enemy wielding a samurai sword. He had to know how to maneuver at these close ranges so that his longer weapon would not become hampered when it was being wielded.

Some samurai soldiers of the higher ranks carried their spears when mounted on horseback. It was usually fastened to his leg or stirrup in an iron or copper nest called a *yari-ate*. The lower-ranking yarijutsu *ashigaru* (foot soldiers) usually carried their spears, and often those of their officers, on their shoulders.

It is interesting to note that after major battles, the yari was used to carry the heads of the defeated generals to the victor's camps. These war trophies were displayed to show the bravery and heroics of the yarijutsu soldiers.

During the height of the Warring Periods, there were hundreds of yarijutsu schools throughout Japan. Each of these ryu had its own approach to teaching individual and group tactics using the spear. This included ways the yari could be used in singular and mass battlefield combat, techniques of attacking mounted sword- or spear-wielding enemies at their most vulnerable anatomical areas, and spearing exposed areas not protected by armor (including the open knee, under the armpit, and the groin area where the warrior straddled the saddle).

During one-on-one ground fighting, a yarijutsu foot soldier was a force to be reckoned with. Thrusting techniques could be turned into ripping, slicing, and goring maneuvers by simply swinging the yari in various directions, and the staff handle could be used for blocking.

Though it happened occasionally, the yari was not normally used like a javelin. Most yarijutsu warriors chose to keep a firm grasp on their weapon. To lose it in the heat of

combat was bad enough, but to throw it at an enemy, mounted or otherwise, was inviting serious consequences.

ABOUT TANTOJUTSU

Tantojutsu literally translates to mean short sword art [tanto = short sword] + [jutsu = art]. The tanto served as an auxiliary close-range weapon for samurai warriors, women, and even tradesmen. It also had strict ritualistic significance when committing the act of *hara-kiri* (belly cutting) or, more formally, *seppuku* (ritualistic suicide).

The tanto, being the shortest of the samurai's swords, was the only one of his three weapons that did not have a *tsuba* (handguard). Since it was used almost exclusively for extremely close-range encounters, this additional protection was not deemed necessary.

The tanto was forged, sharpened, and polished in the exact same manner as the daito and wakizashi. Keenly honed edges, narrow temper lines along the cutting edge, and ornately designed handles were among the features of these weapons. Some even had scabbards with pockets for short utility knifes.

Tantojutsu as a knife fighting method covers a wide range of attacking and counterattacking maneuvers. Slices, stabs, rips, gouges, multiple slashes, and combination tactics were among the most common ways that the tanto could be used for defending oneself.

As with almost any short single-edged bladed weapon, the ability to conceal it and bring it into action without the opponent seeing it was important. Geishas, spies, assassins, and charlatans all found this handy self-defense weapon useful for eliminating unsuspecting targets. More than one noble samurai lost his life by being caught off guard by a rival wielding one of these lethal, compact instruments.

Militarily, the tanto was usually employed as a last-resort weapon when a samurai warrior may have lost or broke his daito on the field of battle. Tantojutsu sensei stressed the importance of the quick kill when caught in a situation like this, including attacking the heart, severing the

carotid artery, puncturing the lungs, or piercing the brain through the ear or upward from under the throat.

ABOUT KYUJUTSU

Kyujutsu is the classical Japanese name given to the art of combat archery. The precursor to this fighting art actually dates back to Neolithic times when the bow and arrow was used almost exclusively for hunting.

Japanese mythology states that the first emperor, Jimmu, boldly and proudly stood before his subjects with a bow in hand and a full quiver of arrows slung over his right shoulder. It is further chronicled that during the third century, when the Mongol invaders threatened Japan, the bow and arrow was used as a weapon as well for hunting. However, it was not until the Nara Period (710-784), when Chinese archery was introduced in Japan, that the art of bow and arrow warfare reached a zenith.

In the Heian Era (794–1156), kyujutsu became one of the 18 martial arts in which a Japanese samurai warrior was expected to become proficient. As warlords vied for more land and wealth, martial art schools went to great extremes to make all of their retainers skilled in kenjutsu. Up until the end of the Tokugawa era (1867), the bow and arrow remained a staple in almost every warlord's military arsenal.

The samurai warrior's kyujutsu training included learning how to shoot accurately from horseback in synchronized regimented fashion and from virtually every position imaginable. Combat archery became so popular among

samurai generals that it eventually changed the course of warfare in feudal Japan. Because of its significance in major military campaigns, highly skilled archers were directly responsible for the advent of better armor. Before the introduction of firearms by the Portuguese, kyujutsu played an important role in the victories amassed by the Minamoto forces.

It was said that to perfect the accuracy needed to down a well-armored enemy, a kyujutsu warrior needed to shoot 1,000 arrows a day into small targets from great distances. After he could do that consistently, he then learned the science of hitting moving targets with similar accuracy. The typical *enteki* (distant target) shooting range was more than 70 yards from the archer to a stationary or moving target. It took an enormous amount of practice and devotion to achieve sustained accuracy at this distance.

Even with the introduction of firearms, the bow and arrow never completely fell out of demand among samurai warriors. The fact that it was silent, could fire a sustained amount of projectiles, and was not adversely effected by the weather (rain water dampened gunpowder) made it a reliable staple in the samurai warrior's arsenal.

By the end of the Edo (Tokugawa) Period, when the samurai caste was abolished, kyujutsu declined as a war art and was gradually refined as the art of *kyudo*.

ABOUT NAGINATAJUTSU

Naginatajutsu is defined as the art of the curved spear. It is most closely aligned with yarijutsu, or the straight spear arts. The main distinction is that the *naginata* has a broad, flat, curved cutting blade as opposed to the yari's triangulated or diamond-shaped tapered blade.

Because of the naginata's wide blade, it is sometimes mislabeled as a halberd, but it really is a spear designed for a broader range of tactical applications. Although similar to a halberd, it is best described as a short samurai sword affixed to the end of a bo. Another version called the *nagimaki* has a longer sword

attached to it. It also has a shorter, sturdier staff and is considered by most martial historians to be the first Japanese halberd.

There are several theories of how the naginata evolved into a major weapon among the samurai. Rough prototypes of the design have been found with sharp edges encrusted with stone chips, which indicate that it could have been a chopping tool at one time. Later discoveries featured sharpened metal bladed heads (metal was introduced to Japan from the Asian continent shortly after 200 B.C.). By the time of the Tenkei War (934-41), the naginata had come into its own and become a favorite for close-range warfare along with the sword. It was ideally suited to defend against foot soldier and horse-mounted samurai warriors.

By the eleventh century, the naginata and the naginatajutsu fighting system became even more refined. Regimented battlefield tactics for the weapon were commonplace,

and it was feared by most foot soldiers who encountered it.

Because of its long, sweeping blade, the naginata could be used for broad propeller-like slashes in virtually every direction. Since many naginata were fitted with protruding metal tips at the butt end of the shaft (opposite the blade), the weapon could also be used for jabbing and skewering the enemy when he was busy defending against the cutting end of the weapon. Another distinct advantage was the fact that the naginata had the very best qualities of the spear and the sword, a definite tactical edge when it came to all-out combat.

As the naginata became more sophisticated in design, variations in blade configurations made it even more lethal. Some of the later designs included forked, hooked, and double-sided cutting surfaces, allowing for gaffing, ripping, tearing, slicing, and lopping maneuvers. The perpendicular mounted attachments (usually sharpened) offered another tactical advantage—they could be used for blocking sword cuts or spear thrusts from a safe distance.

It is of special note that by the mid-Edo period, it had become fashionable for Japanese women to use the naginata in a classical fashion. They actually engaged men in regulated contests wearing protective armor, vying for points based on simulated life-or-death combat. By the 1600s, use of the weapon was almost exclusively a women's martial art. Even today, Japanese women are known for their exceptional fighting skills with the naginata.

ABOUT JOJUTSU AND BOJUTSU

Jojutsu literally translates to mean stick art [jo = stick] + [jutsu = art]. This fighting art focuses exclusively on a stick of about 40 inches in length. *Bojutsu* (staff art) uses a longer six-foot version.

Historically, there is no documented proof that the jo was used in a stylized weapon fighting system in Japan until after the sixth century. Of the more than 300 bojutsu ryu found throughout Japan today, almost all have some distinct Chinese influence in their methods. This art may have been introduced during the T'ang

Dynasty, when China exchanged much cultural and military lore with the Japanese.

It was not until the late Kamakura period (1185-1333) or early Muromachi period (1333-1573) that bojutsu in general, and jojutsu in particular, became a systematic art within itself. The first real style of bojutsu was created and developed by Izasa Ienao (1387-1488) as a method of close-range combat. His ryu was known as Katori-ryu, and since its inception during the mid-1400s, its art has become the root system from which all feudal and modern jojutsu systems can trace their existence.

During feudal times, samurai warriors learned the ways of bojutsu as an alternative form of protection for times when they might be without a katana or other bladed weapon. Samurai warriors trained in bojutsu developed a healthy respect for the staff after becoming proficient with it.

Since almost all of Japan's staff weapons were made of hard red oak with extremely dense grains, the weapon had a certain formidability when it came to enduring strikes, slashes, and cuts from bladed weapons. These rugged staffs were generally between one and two inches in diameter and of sufficient resiliency to withstand a lot of punishment without being destroyed. In fact, a good staff could withstand the impact of virtually every weapon in the samurai arsenal.

Early forms of bo fighting that derived their origins from Katori-ryu included just 12 different staff fighting concepts. This repertoire included six tactical stratagems that dealt exclusively with frontal assaults and defenses; the remaining six focused on rear level practices.

It is noteworthy to mention that in feudal times, bojutsu and jojutsu were practiced without the use of protective equipment of any kind. This was intentional so the fighters would develop courage, exercise caution, gain respect, and learn the control needed to use a staff in a realistic fashion. Since the sensei were mostly concerned with reality in combat, they felt that a student who wore armor during training would disregard the subtle attacks that could cause severe injury or possibly death in real combat. In those times, one seemingly insignificant mistake could make the difference between victory or defeat.

As more importance was placed on the staff as a weapon art in Japan, some of the more innovative exponents of this seemingly simple weapon gained notoriety for their stick fighting skills. One such martial artist was Muso Gonnosoku. Muso had first studied Katori ryu bojutsu during the time of the great swordsman Miyamoto Musashi (late 1500s and early 1600s). He was also skilled with the sword, but he had a special fondness for the staff. Through experimentation in many matches with other warriors, he devised a method of stick fighting that proved to be very successful against other weapons. Muso is credited as being the only fighter to have ever defeated Miyamoto Musashi in a duel. In that battle he used the new stick fighting art that he developed at the first jojutsu school in Japan, Shindo Muso Ryu.

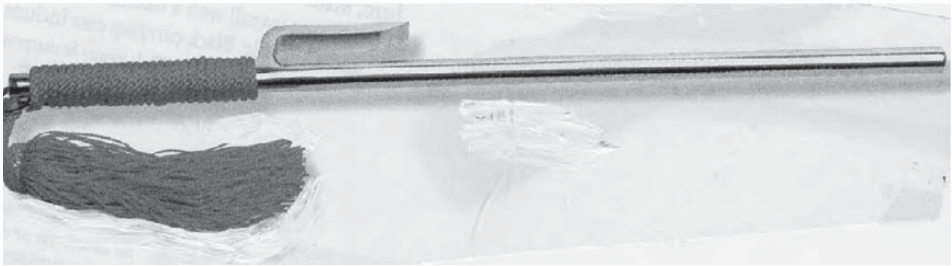
In essence, Muso Gonnosoku developed his stick fighting style from a blend of spear fighting, sword fighting, and other techniques of armed and unarmed combat. The foundation of his style contained 12 basic blocks and blows in addition to more than 70 specialized techniques for dealing with almost every conceivable self-defense situation. It was effective against any form of weapon or empty-hand fighting tactic. His Shindo-Muso ryu stick fighting style is considered the forerunner of all modern jojutsu styles.

Today, most jojutsu styles are taught as classical do forms of stick fighting, but there are still a few that emphasize the older jutsu combat applications. Regardless of whether a ryu is of the jutsu or do derivation, most feature techniques such as poking, blocking, parrying, deflecting, restraining, suppressing, intercepting, and covering.

ABOUT JUTTEJUTSU

The *jutte*, a short-bladed, hand-held, truncheon-like device, is also known as a *jittei*, *jitte*, or *jutta* in the Japanese vernacular. The combative use of this rare weapon is referred to as *juttejutsu* and is a sophisticated method of restraining and subduing an armed or unarmed opponent.

In Japan's feudal era, the jutte was a symbol of authority of the constabulary and police. In



fact, the jutte was restricted to law enforcement personnel who had proven their abilities to use it to apprehend unruly suspects in the line of duty. It became a badge of distinction symbolizing their skill and authority when patrolling their precinct.

The origin of the jutte is not certain, but both the Okinawans and Japanese claim heritage to its creation. Wherever its origin, it had a certain resemblance to the Okinawan sai and manji sai. It was approximately 15 inches long and usually consisted of an iron or steel rod, a long hilt, and a somewhat square or rectangular hook-prong jutting from the handle that extended several inches parallel to the main shaft-blade. The distinction between the Okinawan sai and the jutte is that the sai has two prong-hooks, one on each side of the shaft, and the jutte has only one.

Mastery of juttejutsu depended on skill in the art of displacement and body movement (*tai-sabaki*). Among the common techniques that the police used when apprehending a disorderly sword wielder was to trap the katana blade between the jutte's hook-prong and blade. Should the criminal not relent or release his sword, the officer could use powerful torquing maneuvers to snap the blade or wrench the weapon from his hand, oftentimes breaking the hand in the process. He could also thrust the sharp hook or the tip of the blade into sensitive parts of the anatomy, hit nerve points to inflict excruciating pain, and attack joints to disable the resistor. More lethal techniques included powerful blows to the eyes, base of the skull, throat, and kidneys, but these were last-resort tactics.

ABOUT SODEGARAMIJUTSU

Sodegaramijutsu is loosely defined as the combative art of using the barbed hook spear. Specifically, it is a technically exacting method of using this form of spear to entangle the sleeves of enemy spearmen and swordsman during battle.

For over 2,000 years the spear has been a staple of the bugei arsenal in Japan. From the time that the hoko (Japan's oldest bladed weapon) appeared and was later reconfigured to the yari as we know it today, there have been more than 700 distinct types of spears put into military use. Many of these were produced during the Sengoku era (1482-1558), a period when all of Japan was in constant conflict.

The basic spear has been ingeniously modified in some unusual ways. Some employed curved blades, hooks, gaffs, sickle spearheads, double-bladed trident blades, cross spearheads, barbed shanks, and single, double, and triple projections at various angles. As these odd-looking yari appeared, so did various fighting styles for them. At one point there were more than 460 schools teaching specialized combat tactics for using the spear.

Sodegaramijutsu prospered during this time and became a highly specialized field of yarijutsu. The barbed hooks and protrusions made it possible for the spearman to use elaborate restraining, suppressing, controlling, and covering actions while simultaneously slashing, stabbing, ripping, or goring the opponent. All the while, the shaft could be used for deflecting, intercepting, or avoiding an attack by an enemy wielding another spear or a sword.

This art was not limited to one-on-one combat against armed foot soldiers. Sodegaramijutsu tactics could be employed against mounted warriors to pull them from their steeds. Once an armored samurai was thrown to the ground, the combatant could end his life before it was possible to recover. This made the barbed and hooked spears especially useful during major campaigns where huge armies of mounted samurai engaged in battle.

To protect castle fortresses, warriors skilled in sodegaramijutsu could readily dispatch invaders who tried to scale the walls. Usually, the barbs or hooks were used to sever the muscles in the arms of the invader while the spear tip was thrust into the exposed openings around the neck of their armor.

ABOUT KUSARIJUTSU

Kusarijutsu literally translates to mean chain art [kusari = chain] + [jutsu = art]. This art includes a variety of mace-like devices that were used by samurai warriors, ninja, and peasants alike. However, it was the samurai caste who elevated it to a truly classical Japanese bugei art by proving its worth in battle.

The kusari was an integral component in several of the more than 35 classifications of combat systems,. The chain integrated with weapon-tools such as the sickle, spikeless mace head, and various lengths of staff in unique ways. The art of using the chain connected to the kama, for instance, is traditionally referred to as *kusarigamajutsu* [kusari = chain] + [gama or kama = sickle] + [jutsu = art].

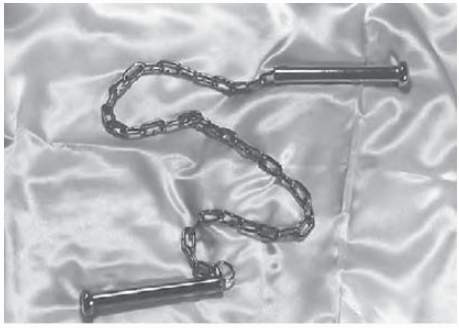
The *kusarigama* had a small, one-pound metal ball attached to one end of a lengthy section of chain. The razor-sharp sickle was affixed to the opposite end. The 12-foot chain was forged of iron and later of steel.

Tactically, a soldier had to be extremely adept at maneuvering such a seemingly unwieldy weapon. Because of the great length of the chain, ball, and bladed sickle, he had to learn what types of techniques worked best at different ranges. Spins, twirls, chain feed-out techniques, loops, strikes, slashes, ball-throws, directional adjustments while the weapon was in motion, and enshrouding gambits were all a part of the training.

The speed at which twirls and strikes could be executed, especially with the ball or sickle, could break bones or sever extremities in the blink of an eye. However, the slightest error in judgment could mean the soldier's own demise.

The second art that incorporated the chain was the classical bugei system known as *gekikanjutsu*. This style featured a weapon comprised of a lengthy section of chain attached to a ball. The kama was completely eliminated. Naturally, this weapon was not as lethal as the kusarigama, but it posed a serious threat to any enemy who underestimated it. Since there was only one object attached to the chain, it was less difficult to maneuver.

Spinning, twirling, and looping needed to be mastered if the gekikan was going to be used



effectively. But these maneuvers had their drawbacks: a sword, staff, or spear properly positioned at the right time could entangle or foul the chain and force the user into a compromising, possibly fatal situation. On the other hand, should he have the foresight to recognize when the adversary might attempt such a maneuver, he could compensate the timing and/or range of the ball and chain and inflict devastating damage before the attacker could react.

Another interesting tactic was to keep the chain coiled around the upper arm and elbow and unfurl it its entire distance in one maneuver. After impact, the weapon could be recovered quickly so that any follow-up tactics could be employed if necessary to finish off the temporarily disabled enemy.

Another flexible weapon in the samurai's bugei arsenal was the *manrikikusari* [manriki = 10,000 power] + [kusari = chain]. It was named by the famous feudal swordsman Masaki Toshimitsu Donnoshin. He called his creation the 10,000 power chain because he felt it possessed the power and ingenuity of 10,000 men. He devised the manrikikusari so he would have a weapon that could subdue and/or disarm an opponent without killing or drawing blood, though it was possible to do so if the need arose.

The manrikikusari is basically a section of chain approximately two feet in length with weights attached to both ends. It is designed so that each weighted end can be gripped comfortably within the span of the outstretched arms. This made it functional for defensive and offensive techniques at a fairly close range.

Tactics with the manrikikusari included trapping the opponent's extremities or weapon, looping, parrying sword thrusts (when the chain was kept taut), snap-striking (like a bull whip), flailing, strangulation, and hobbling maneuvers.

After the Masaki-ryu was established, other great martial artists followed with their own style of fighting with this weapon. Some modified the length of the chain, others varied the shape and size of the end weights, and others introduced more specialized ways to use the weapon for self-defense. Some of these schools included Hoen-ryu, Toda-ryu, Shuchin-ryu, Kyoshin-ryu, Meichi-ryu, Shindo-ryu, and Hikada-ryu.

The name of the weapon underwent some changes as well. It was also known as *kusari-bundo, ryo-bundo, kusari, sode-kusari, tama-kusari,* and *kusari-jutte*. In Okinawa it is called the *suruchin* (weighted chain).

A mace-like instrument called the *chigiriki* was another fascinating articulated weapon in the Japanese bugei arsenal. Simply due to its design, the chigiriki merited a special niche in the flexible weapon arsenal. It consisted of a chain that could vary between 3 to 10 feet in length, with a lead, bronze, or cast-iron weight attached to one end. The other end was mounted to a pole, which could also vary from 25 to 50 inches.

Some of chigiriki had metal nodes strategically placed around the beater. This weapon was very similar to the maces used in Europe in medieval times. However, the Japanese versions sometimes had cylindrical spiked beater weights as opposed to the consistently round ones found throughout Europe.

The art of using this articulated instrument was commonly referred to as *chigirikijutsu*. Though it seemed like a somewhat cumbersome device, in the hands of a skilled fighter, it was indeed a lethal weapon. The momentum generated when the wielder spun or rotated the staff was transferred to the spiked beater. Anything that got in its path received the brunt of that tremendous force. The weapon could be swung so fast that the spikes would penetrate samurai armor and helmets. If the spinning chain struck something, the spiked beater kept wrapping around it until it struck the opponent. Another unique characteristic was that when rapidly spun, the chain literally became a solid staff of iron. This in itself could inflict serious damage to anything it struck.

The simplicity of the chigiriki design was such that virtually anyone could make one on relatively short notice. A chain could easily be affixed to a walking staff and any form of substantial weighed object attached to the other end. It could also be disassembled easily for traveling or concealment.

ABOUT TESSENJUTSU

Tessenjutsu was largely practiced by the elite among the samurai caste. It describes the use of the iron hand fan (*tessen*) as a defensive weapon for nobility. In many parts of Asia, the fan was a symbol of authority of the powerful upper castes.

It is uncertain if the use of the war fan, as it was sometimes called, was developed by Japanese nobles who went to China or if it evolved when possession of classical weapons was criminalized inside the courts of the shoguns. It is logical to assume that the samurai warrior, well-versed in the codes of social conduct, would have made an art of the use of such a potent symbol as the hand fan.

Tessenjutsu takes into consideration all of the functional characteristics of the typical folding fan and adapts them into a clever methodology where virtually every part of the fan can be used in a martial fashion. By using thin strips of iron in place of the typical bamboo vanes of the folding fan, it was possible, with a flick of the wrist, to create a fairly broad defensive shield when the fan was flipped open. If the outer ends of the vanes were sharpened, they could be used for cutting, slicing, and slashing an antagonist's neck, arteries, eyes, or other exposed area of the anatomy. A folded tessen could be used like a club or truncheon at the closer ranges.

Strikes, pokes, thrusts, gouges, locks, restraints, and snap-strikes are among the more common techniques in tessenjutsu. For a noble samurai who was well trained in some of the empty-hand Japanese martial arts, pressure and nerve point attacks, joint locking maneuvers, and finger and extremity breaking techniques could be executed.

Today, very few individuals teach this little-known bugei combat art.

CONCLUSION

I hope you now have a better understanding of the types and uses of weaponry from Okinawa and Japan. You should realize that tactics and strategies vary greatly between the empty-hand forms of martial arts and the weapon-oriented methodologies. That is not to say that they are altogether separate from each other. Some of the heiho tactics and strategies are common to both forms of combat, whereas others are strictly unique to a style. If you have had extensive training in either or both of these martial disciplines, you will immediately realize which ones are best suited for each particular style.

If you are not skilled in empty hand or weapon fighting, I encourage you to enroll in a class under the supervision of a certified sensei who teaches one of the traditional disciplines. If your interest gravitates toward the weapon arts, then this book will be an excellent source for familiarizing you with this vast curriculum.

I have tried to be concise in presenting the array of weapon arts that derive their origin from Okinawa and Japan. Suffice it to say that it would take a volume the size of an entire encyclopedia to convey all of the particulars regarding each of the ryu touched on in this work.

If I have succeeded in providing you with the essence of what true weapon fighting is all about, then this book has been a success. It will be a constant source of valuable tactical and strategic information for years to come as you climb the stairs toward mastery in any of the weapon arts.

All of my best on your journey.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

American karate and kobudo pioneer Sid Campbell is a *soke* (head of family) of the World Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate-Do and Kobudo Association. He was one of the first Americans to introduce Okinawan karate and kobudo to the Western world. Since opening his first dojo in Oakland, California, in 1966, Campbell has taught over 15,000 students in the ways of shorin-ryu (Kobayashi-ryu) and Ryukyuan kobudo. Today he supervises over 46 martial arts dojos around the world and most recently is the co-founder of the Kobudo Warrior Gear company.

Campbell is the author of several books and hundreds of articles relating to the feudal-age martial arts of the Far East and has been featured in virtually every martial arts magazine in the world. On top of his writing, he has produced audio books on tape and instructional self-defense videos, starred and co-starred in several motion pictures, choreographed hundreds of fight scenes for film, and promoted major martial arts championship events.

Campbell has been inducted into the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame (1993 Master Instructor of the Year) and was named Outstanding Okinawan Instructor at the Golden Fist Awards. He is featured in the reference books *Contemporary Authors*, *Who's Who in the World*, *Who's Who in the West*, *Who's Who in the Martial Arts*, *Who's Who in the Martial Arts Elite*, *Who's Who in Karate*, and *Who's Who in American Martial Arts*. A member of the Professional Black Belt World Association, he holds the coveted 8th degree black belt (one of the few Westerners to hold such a high rank) and teaches daily at the World Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate hombu (headquarters) dojo in Oakland, California.

APPENDIX A
KOBUDO PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

BO	bow
CHINTE	chin-tay
CHIZE KUN BO	chee-zay-coon-bow
DO	doe
EIKU	ee-a-coo
GEDAN-UKE	gay-don-ooh-kay
GIMU	gee-moo
GYAKUTE-MOCHI	gee-yaa-coo-tay-mo-chee
GYAKUTE-TSUKI	gee-yaa-coo-tay-tsu-key
HACHI-MAKI	ha-chee-mah-key
HANBO	hon-bow
HONTE-MOCHI	hon-tay-mo-chee
JITSU	jee-tsu
JO	joe
JUTSU	jute-sue
KAI	kah-ee
KAMA,	kah-ma
KAMA KUSARI	kah-ma-coo-sah-ree
KANIGAWA	kah-knee-gah-wah
KARATE-DO	kah-rah-tay-doe
KATA	caw-tah
KENSEI-KOGEKI	ken-say-ee-coe-gay-key
KOBUDO	coe-boo-doe
KUN	coon
KUSHAKUBO	coo-sha-coo-bow
MANJI SAI	mon-jee-sah-ee
MEIJI	may-ee-jee
HAHA-TE	nah-ha-tay
NICHO KAMA	knee-cho-kah-ma
NITANBO	knee-ton-bow
NUNCHAKU	noon-cha-coo
NUNTEBO	noon-tay-bow

ODORI ..... oh-doe-ree
OKINAWA ..... oh-key-na-wah
ROCHIN ..... row-chin
ROKUSHAKUBO ..... row-coo-sha-coo-bow
RYUKYU ..... ree-you-key-you
SAI ..... sa-ee
SANSHAKUBO ..... sahn-sha-coo-bow
SATSUMA ..... sa-tsu-ma
SHOSHAKUBO ..... show-sha-coo-bow
SHURI ..... shew-ree
SHURIKEN-AGE ..... shew-ree-ken-ah-gee
SOTOMAWARI-OSHI ..... sew-toe-ma-wah-ree-oh-she
SOTOMAWARI-TSUKI ..... sew-toe-ma-wah-ree-tsu-key
SOTO-UKE ..... sew-toe-ooh-key
SURUCHIN ..... sue-roo-chin
TAKEBO ..... tah-kay-bow
TANBO ..... ton-bow
TE ..... tay
TEK CHU ..... tech-chew
TEKKO ..... tech-ko
TENBIN ..... tan-been
TESSEN ..... tess-sin
TINBE ..... tin-bay
TODE ..... toe-day
TO-HAI ..... toe-high
TOKUSHO-MOCHI ..... toe-coo-show-mo-chee
TOMARI-TE ..... toe-ma-ree-tay
TONFA ..... tone-fah
TUIFA ..... two-ee-fah
UCHI-UKE ..... ooh-chee-ooh-kay
YARI ..... yah-ree
YAWARA ..... yah-wa-rah
YONSHAKUBO ..... yon-sha-coo-bow

APPENDIX B
BUGEI PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

ASHIKO	ah-she-coe
BAKUHATSUGAMA	bah-coo-ha-tsu-gaw-ma
BATTO-JUTSU	bah-toe-jew-tsu
BO	bow
BO-RYAKU	bow-ree-yah-coo
BOJUTSU	bow-jew-tsu
CHIGI-RIKI	chee-gee-ree-key
CHO-HO	cho-hoe
CHUNIN	chew-knee-in
FUKEDAKE	fu-kay-dah-kay
FUKI-YA	fu-key-yah
FUNDOJUTSU	foon-doe-jew-tsu
GOTON-PO	go-tone-po
HACHIMAKI	ha-chee-maw-key
HANBO	hon-bow
HANBOJUTSU	hon-bow-jew-tsu
HENSO-JUTSU	hay-nnn-sow-jew-tsu
HISHI-BISHI	he-she-bee-she
HOJOJUTSU	hoe-joe-jew-tsu
HOJUTSU	hoe-jew-tsu
IAIDO	ee-eye-doe
INTON-JUTSU	ee-nnn-toe-nnn-jew-tsu
JOJUTSU	joe-jew-tsu
JONIN	joe-nin
JUKENJUTSU	jew-ken-jew-tsu
KAGI-NAWA	kaw-gee-nah-wah
KAGI	kaw-gee
KAKUTE	kaw-coo-tay
KAKURE	kaw-coo-ray
KAMA, GAMA	kaw-ma, gaw-ma
KAMAYARI	kaw-ma-yah-ree
KASHA	kaw-shaa

KATANA ..... .kaw-taw-nah
KATON ..... .kaw-tone
KAYAKU-JUTSU ..... .kaw-yaw-coo-jew-tsu
KENJUTSU ..... .ken-jew-tsu
KINTON ..... .kin-tone
KIRI ..... .key-ree
KOPPOJUTSU ..... .cop-o-jew-tsu
KUDA BASHIGO ..... .coo-dah-baw-she-go
KUNAI ..... .coo-nah-ee
KUNOICHI ..... .coon-o-ee-chee
KUSARIFUNDO ..... .coo-sah-ree-foon-doe
KUSARIGAMA ..... .coo-sah-ree-gah-ma
KUSARIGAMA-JUTSU ..... .coo-sah-ree-gah-ma-jew-tsu
KUSARI ..... .coo-sah-ree
KYOJITSU TENKAN HO ..... .key-o-jeet-tsu tan-cahn-hoe
KYOMON ..... .key-o-mo-nn
MAMUKIGAMA ..... .ma-moo-key-gah-ma
MANRIKIKUSAR ..... .mon-ree-key-coo-sah-ree
METSUBUSHI ..... .met-sue-boo-she
METSUBISHI ..... .met-sue-bee-she
MIKKYO ..... .meek-key-yo
MUSUBI BASHIGO ..... .moo-sue-bee bah-she-go
NAGINATA ..... .nah-gee-nah-tah
NAGINATA-JUTSU ..... .nah-gee-nah-tah-jew-tsu
NAWA ..... .nah-wah
NEKO-TE ..... .neh-co-tay
NINJA-KEN ..... .nin-ja-ken
NITORYU ..... .knee-toe-ree-you
NOROSHI ..... .no-row-she
OH-GAMA ..... .oh-gah-ma
ROKUSHAKU-BO ..... .row-coo-sha-coo-bow
RYU ..... .ree-you
SAGEO ..... .sah-gay-oh
SAYA ..... .sah-yah
SEISHIN TEKI KYOYO ..... .say-ee-sheen-tay-key-key-o-yo
SHIKOMI-ZUE ..... .she-coe-me-zoo-eh
SHIKORO ..... .she-coe-row
SHINOBI-IRI ..... .she-no-bee-ee-ree-ee
SHINOBI-SHOBO ..... .she-no-bee-show-bow
SHINOBI-SHUKO ..... .she-no-bee-shoe-coe
SHINOBI-ZUE ..... .she-no-bee-zoo-eh
SHINOBIGATANA ..... .she-no-bee-gah-ta-nah
SHUKO ..... .shoe-co
SHURIKEN ..... .shoe-ree-ken
SUI-REN ..... .sue-eh-ray-nn
SUIEI-JUTSU ..... .sue-ee-eh-ee-jew-tsu
SUITON ..... .sue-ee-toe-nn
SUMO ..... .sue-moe

TAI-JUTSU ..... .tie-jew-tsu
TAIHENJUTSU ..... .tie-hay-nn-jew-tsu
TAKA BASHIGO ..... .tah-kah-bah-she-go
TANEGASHIMA ..... .tah-nay-gah-she-ma
TANTO-JUTSU ..... .tonto-jew-tsu
TEKKEN ..... .taken
TETSUBISHI ..... .tet-sue-bee-she
TOBI BASHIGO ..... .toby-bah-she-go
TONKI, TONIKI ..... .ton-key, ton-knee-key
TORITEJUTSU ..... .toe-ree-tay-jew-tsu
TSUBA ..... .sue-bah
TSUBO GERI ..... .sue-bow-gay-ree
TSUBUTE ..... .sue-boo-tay
TSURI BASHIGO ..... .sue-ree-bah-she-go
YAMABUSHI ..... .yah-ma-boo-she
YARI-JUTSU ..... .yah-ree-jew-tsu
YARI ..... .yah-ree
YUGEI ..... .you-gay-eh